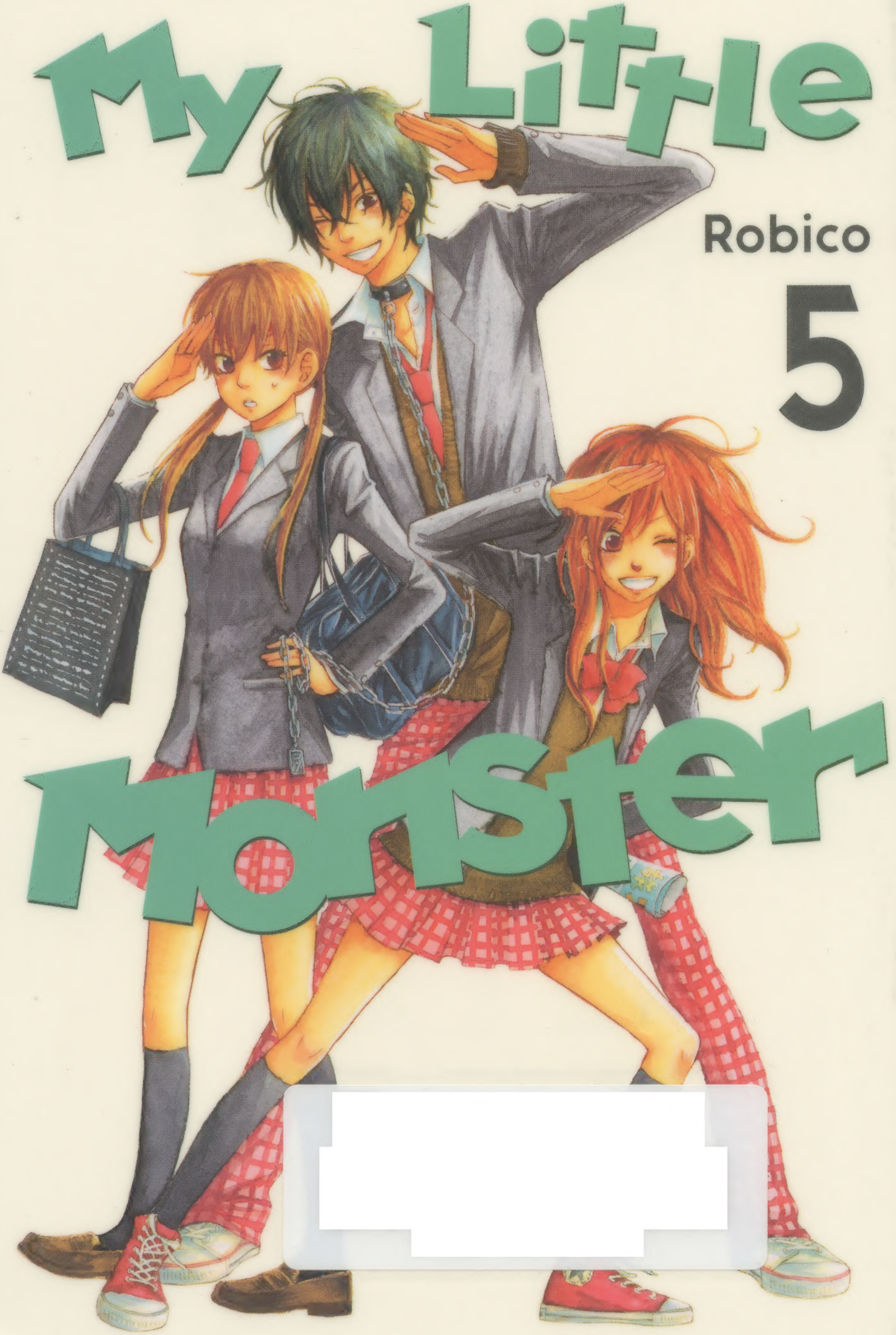


My Little Monster

Robico

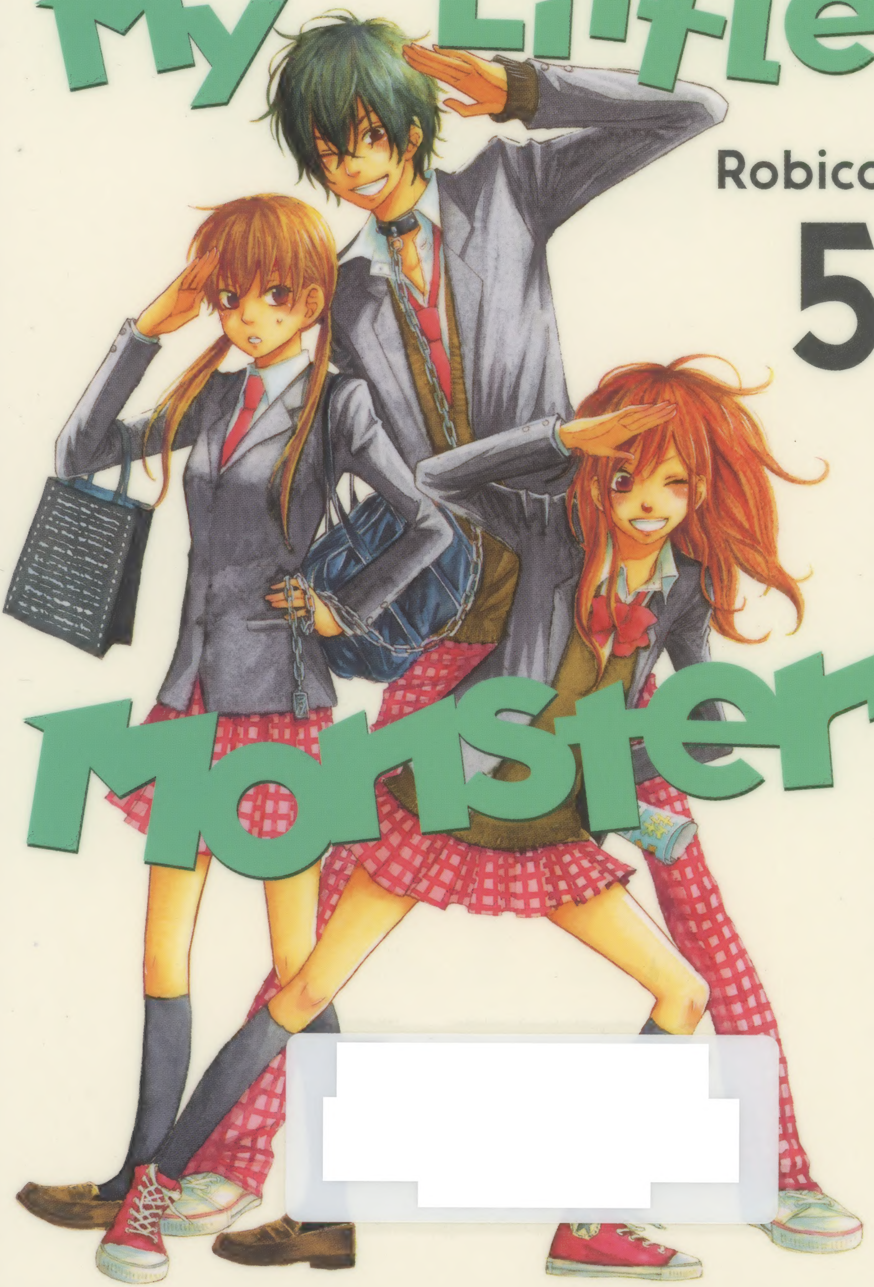
5

[redacted]

My Little Monster

Robico

5



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My Little Monster

Robico

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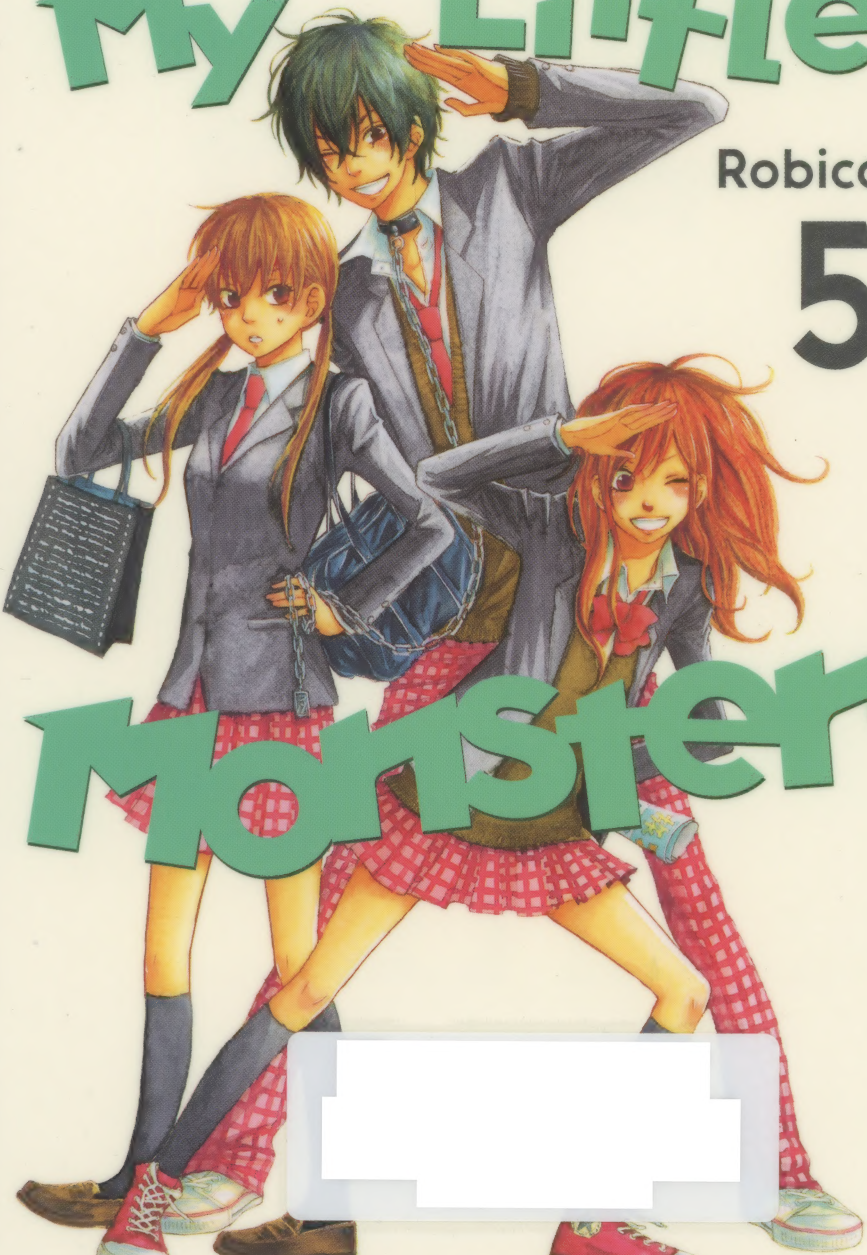

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My Little Monster

Robico

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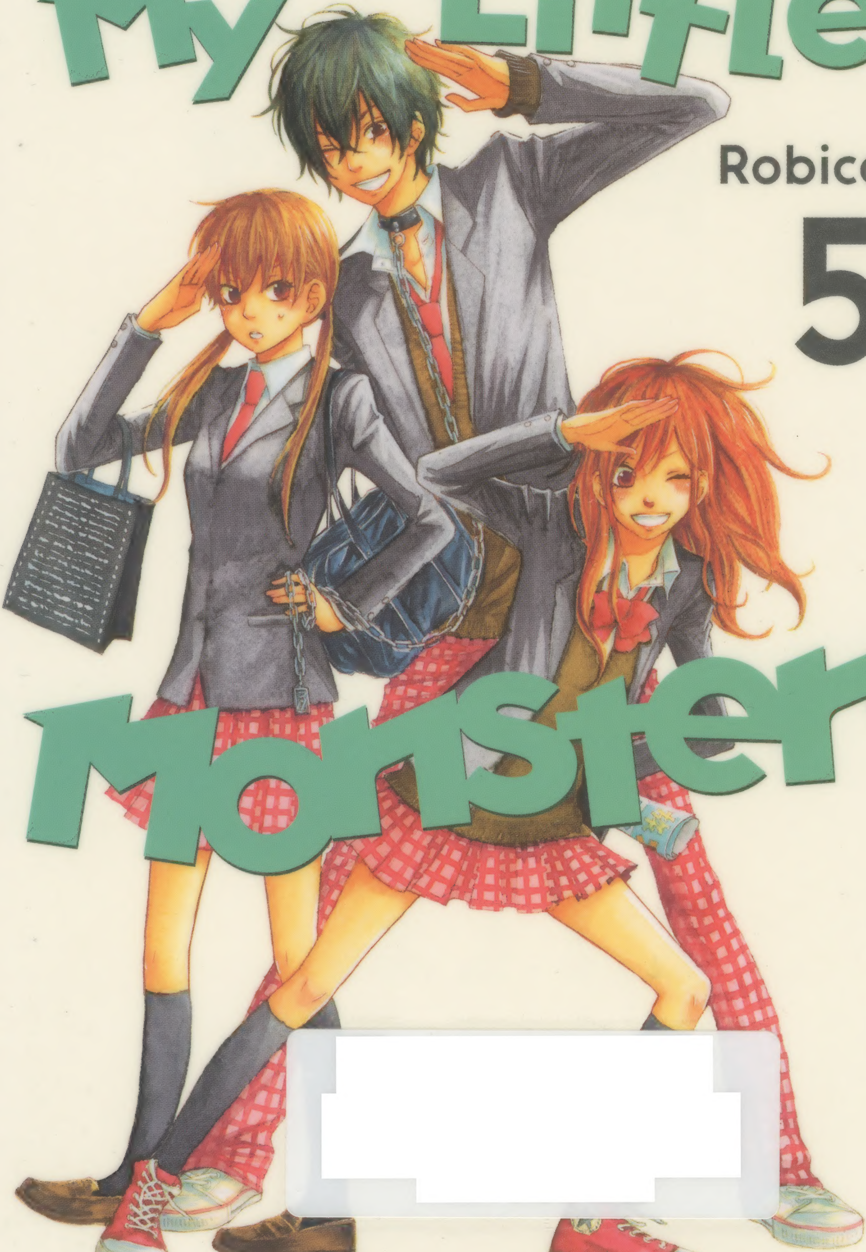

A BRAVE VENTURE

Shizuku is now more determined than ever to make Haru aware of her love for him, but Haru is too preoccupied with fending off Yamaken to notice! Shizuku thinks Haru has nothing to worry about, but competitive above all, Yamaken has some plans of his own. Meanwhile, blossoming feelings turn the popular but romance-hating Natsume into a maiden in love?!

Includes special extras after the story!

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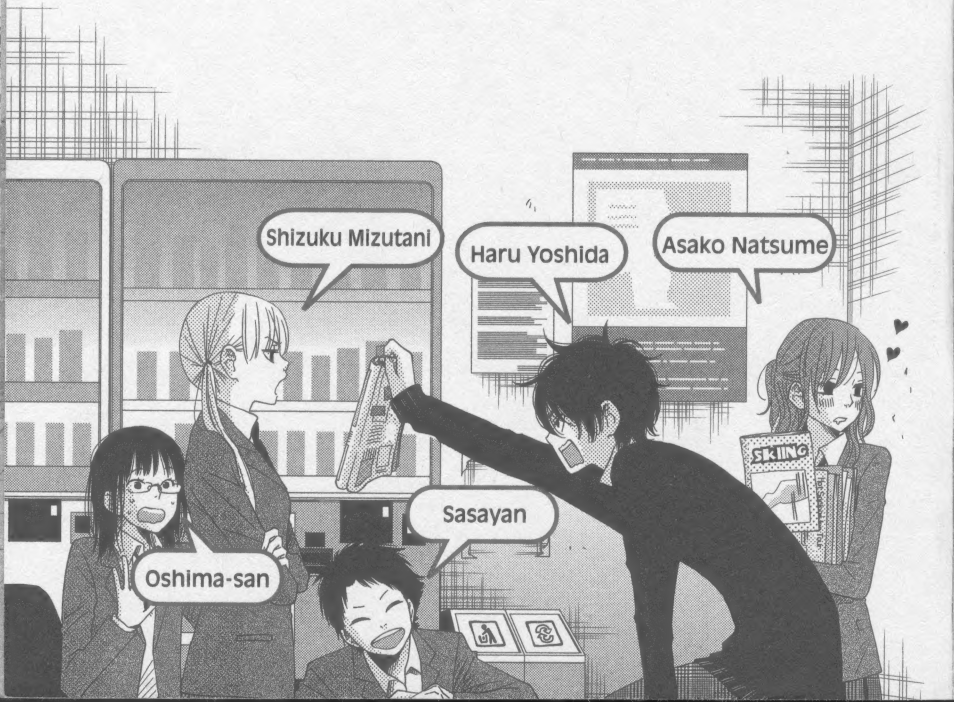
My Little Monster

5

Robico

STORY

When Shizuku Mizutani does a favor for problem child Haru Yoshida, who sits next to her in school, he develops a huge crush on her. Attracted to his innocence, she eventually falls for him too, but when she asks him out, he inexplicably turns her down. Shizuku locks away her romantic feelings. After that, she starts to change, and decides to face people more assertively. She finally tells him again that she likes him, but Haru is so worried about Yamaken's advances on Shizuku that her confession goes right over his head! And while these two constantly fail to get on the same page, Natsume-san's own love story begins to unfold.


Asako Natsume
Haru Yoshida
Shizuku Mizutani
SKIING
Sasayan
Oshima-san

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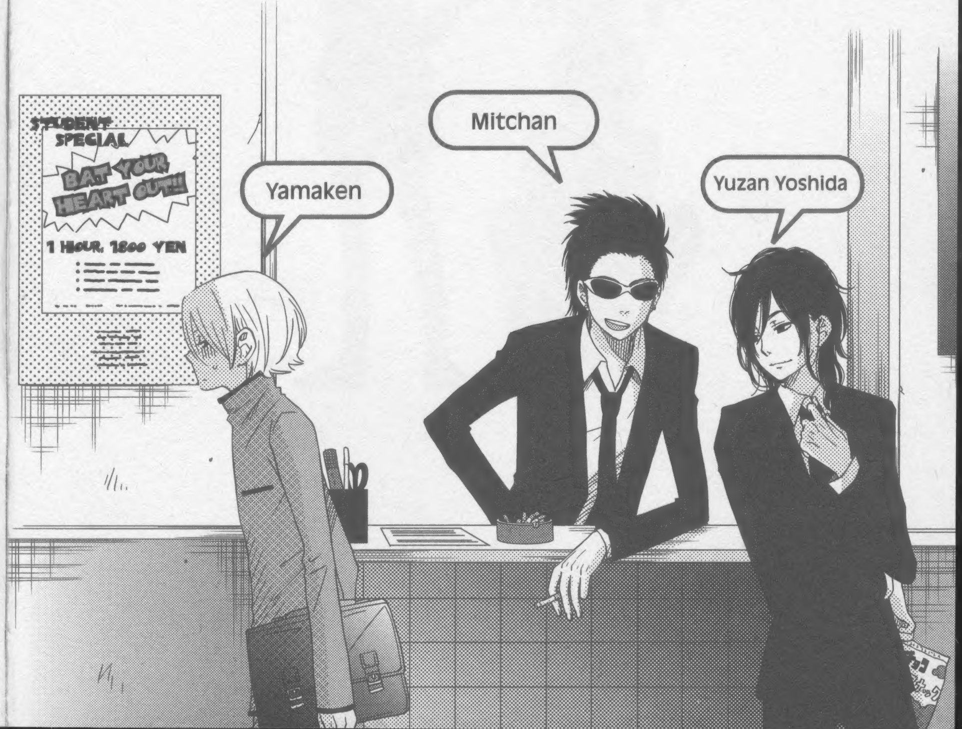
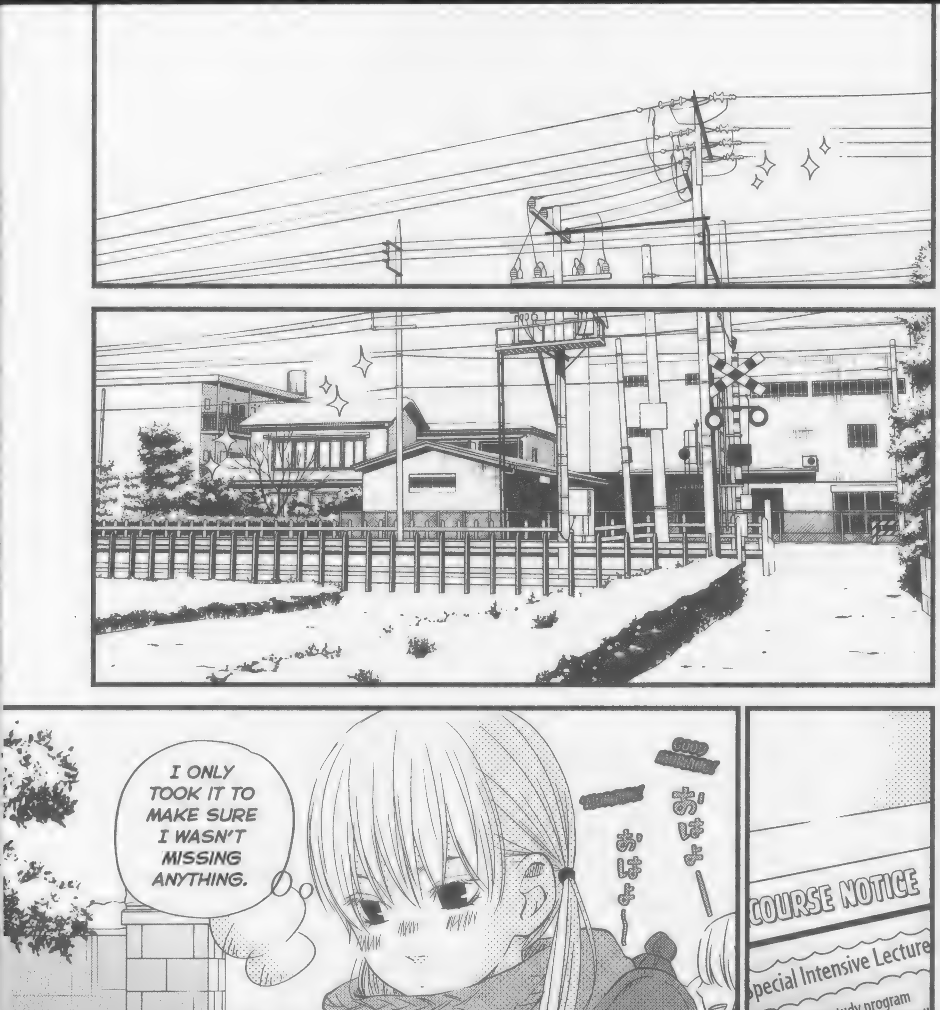
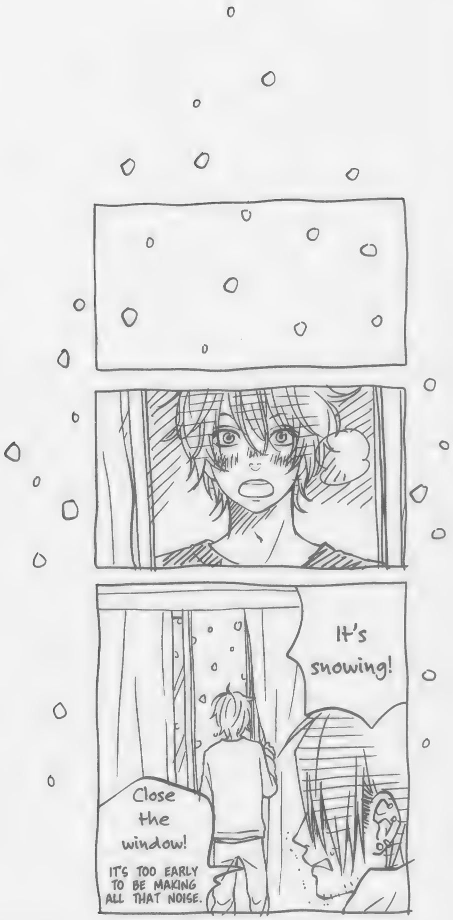
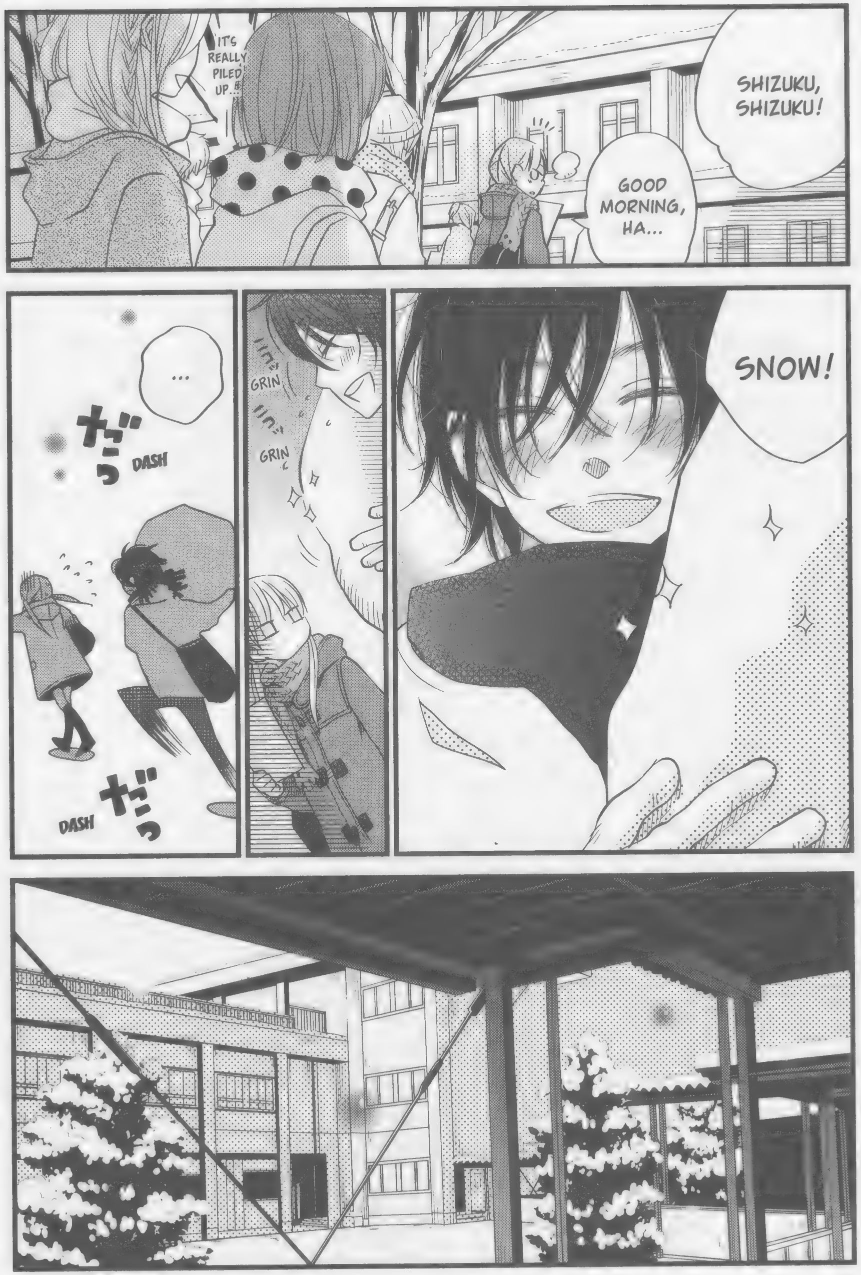
Chapter 18 ... A Dubious Day Off 45
Chapter 19 ... Probably a Date 85
Chapter 20 ... Two Days, One Night 125

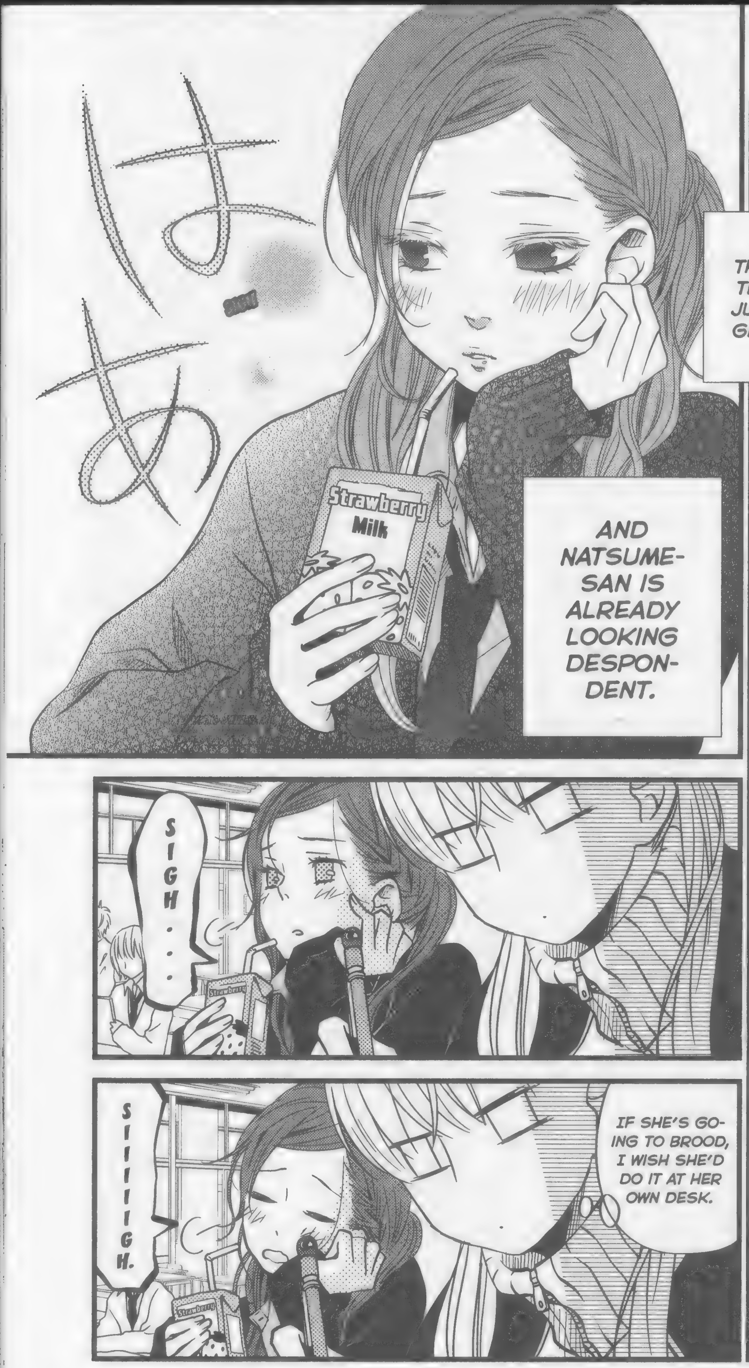

Yuzan Yoshida
Mitchan
Yamaken
STUDENT SPECIAL
BAT YOUR HEART OUT!!
1 HOUR, 1800 YEN

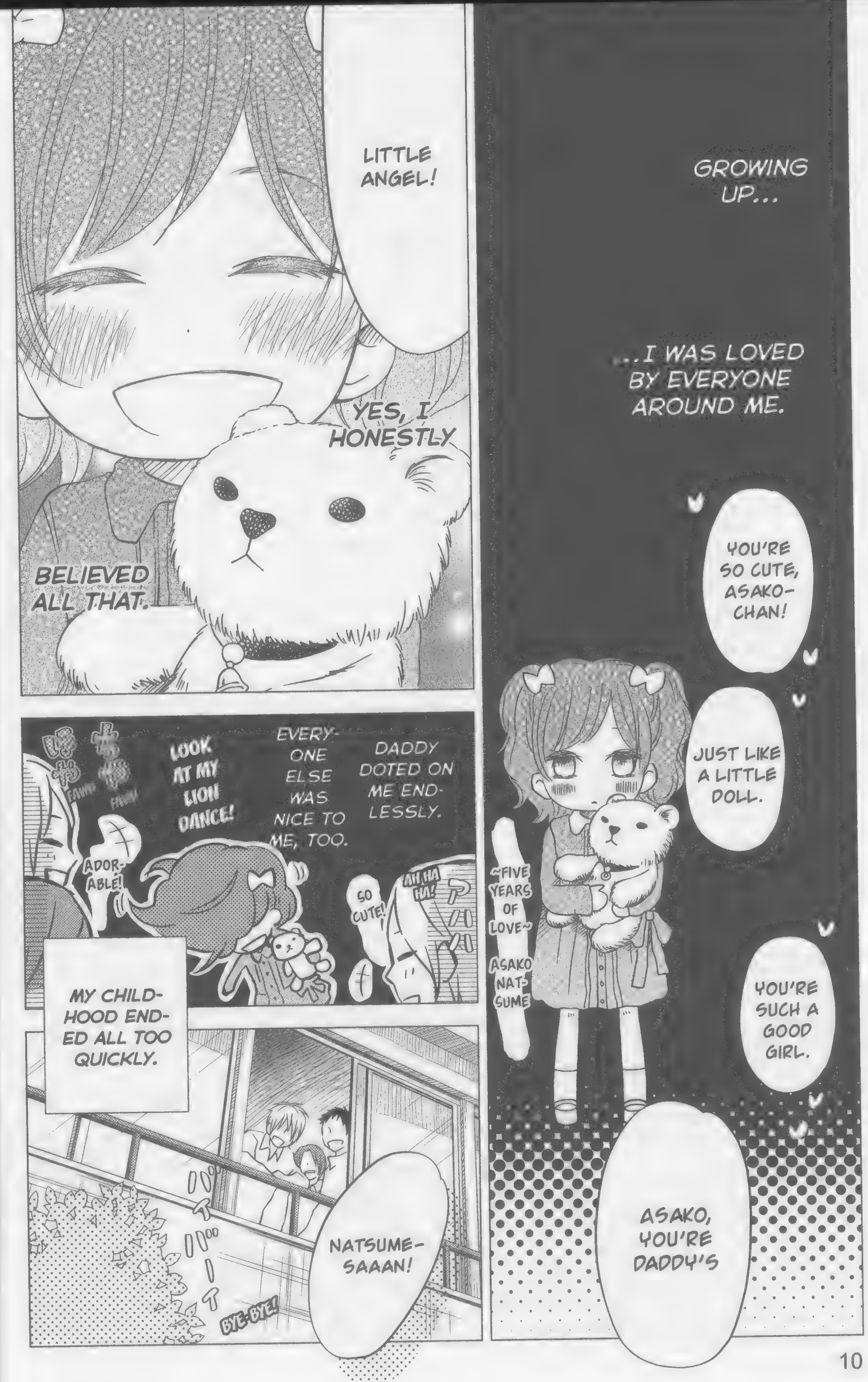
Chapter 17 Natsume-san's Story

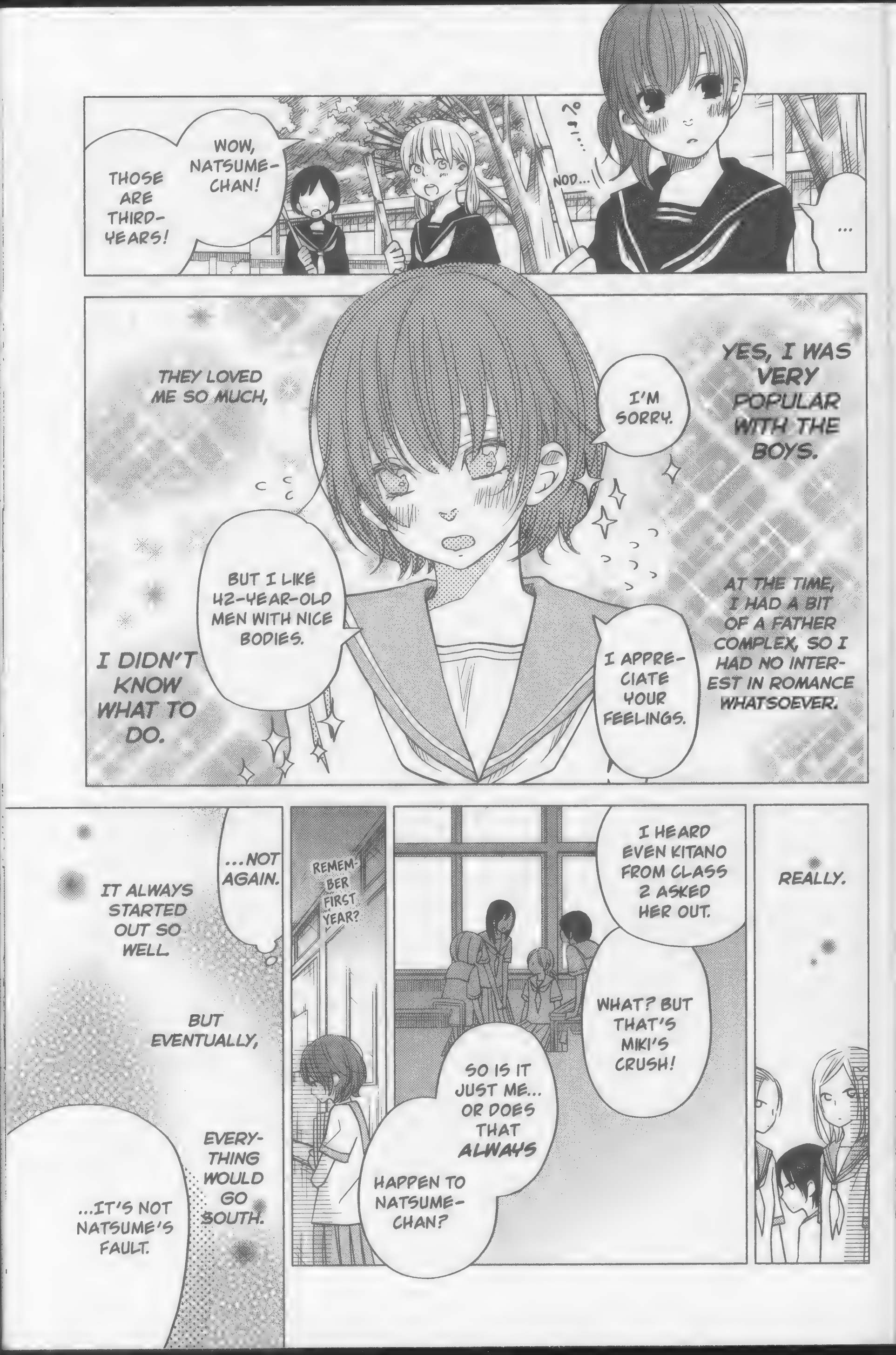

GOOD MORNING!
おはよー
MORNING!
おはよー
I ONLY TOOK IT TO MAKE SURE I WASN'T MISSING ANYTHING.
COURSE NOTICE
Special Intensive Lecture
r independent study program
ill raise your motivation by 20%!
Apply HERE.
WELL...IN THE END,
THERE WASN'T ANYTHING IN THAT CLASS THAT I NEEDED A CLASS FOR.
BUT I WON'T DO THAT AGAIN.
IT'S A WASTE OF MONEY.

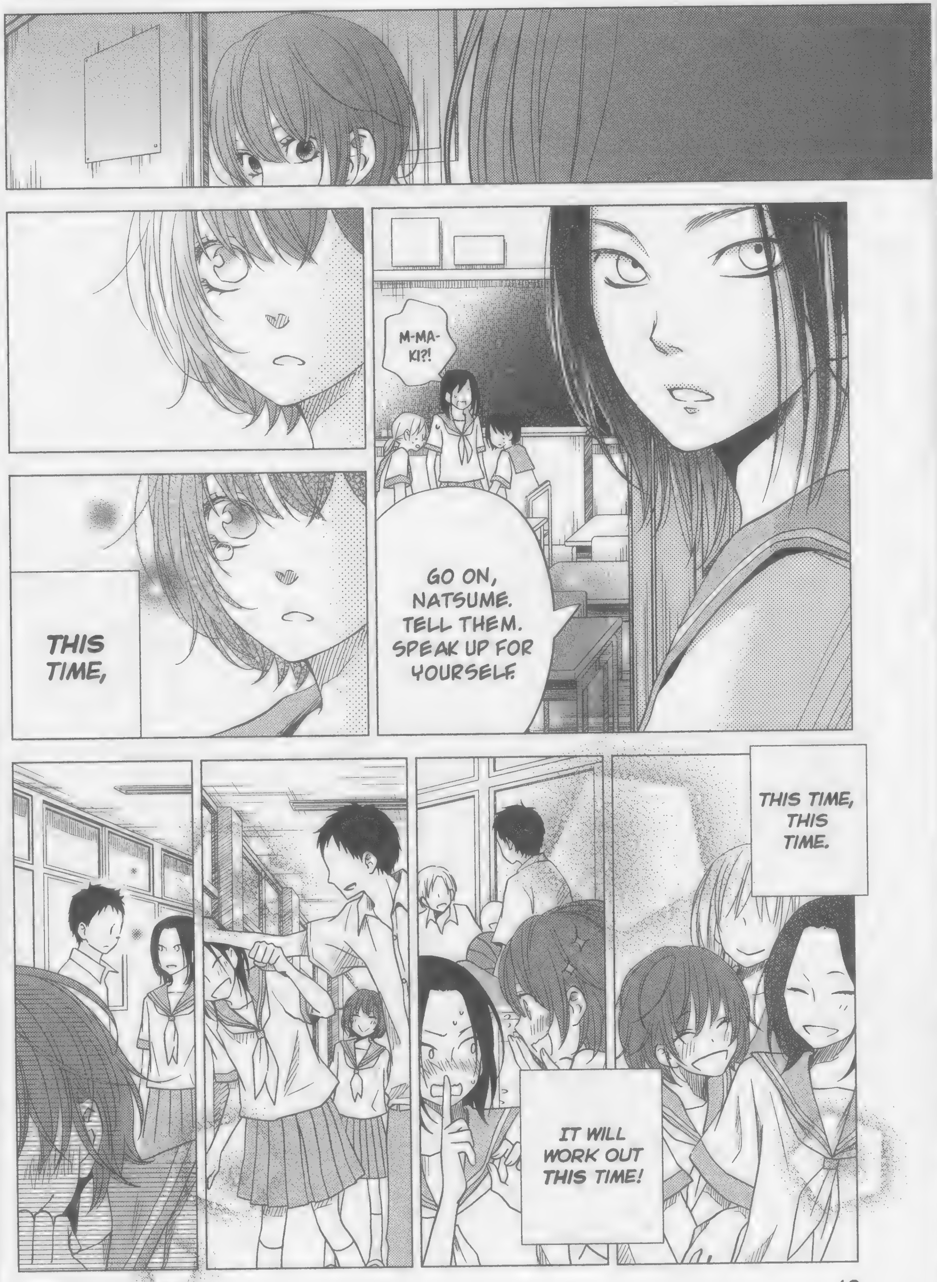

It's snowing!
Close the window!
IT'S TOO EARLY TO BE MAKING ALL THAT NOISE.

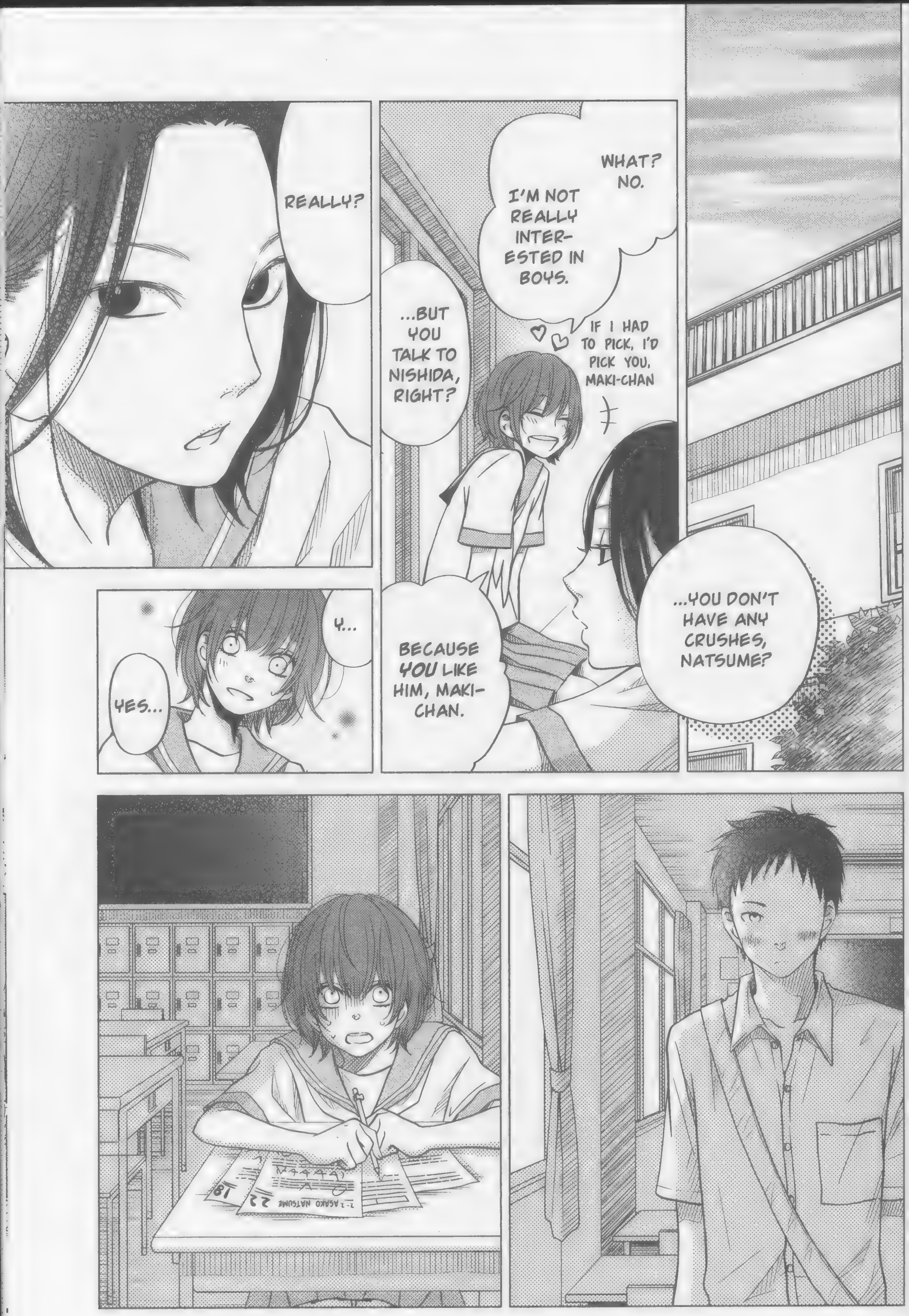

SHIZUKU, SHIZUKU!
IT'S REALLY PILED UP...!!
GOOD MORNING, HA...
SNOW!
GRIN
GRIN
...
だっ DASH
だっ DASH

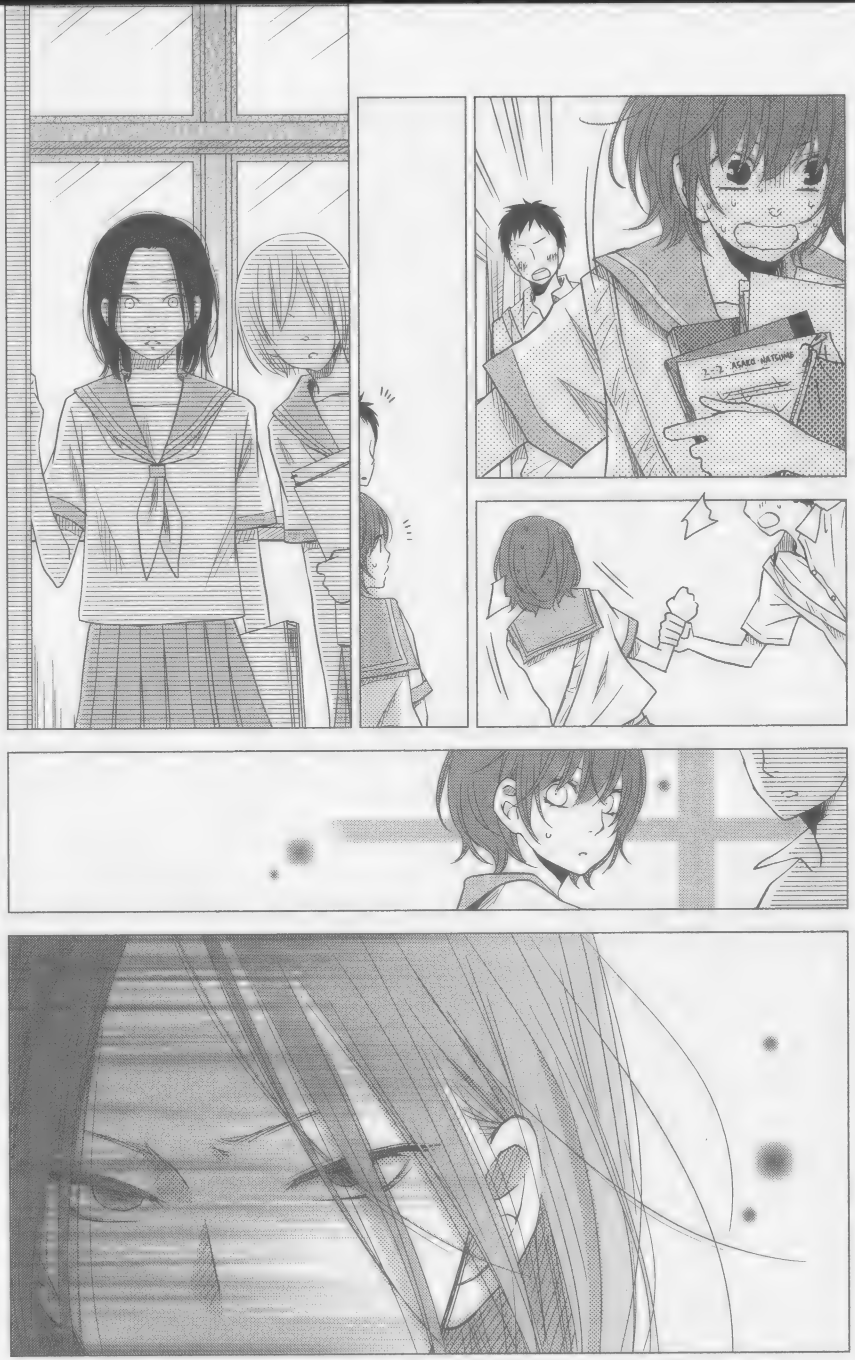

はぁ
THE NEW TERM IS JUST BEGINNING.
AND NATSUME-SAN IS ALREADY LOOKING DESPONDENT.
Strawberry Milk
SIGH...
SIIIIIGH.
IF SHE'S GOING TO BROOD, I WISH SHE'D DO IT AT HER OWN DESK.

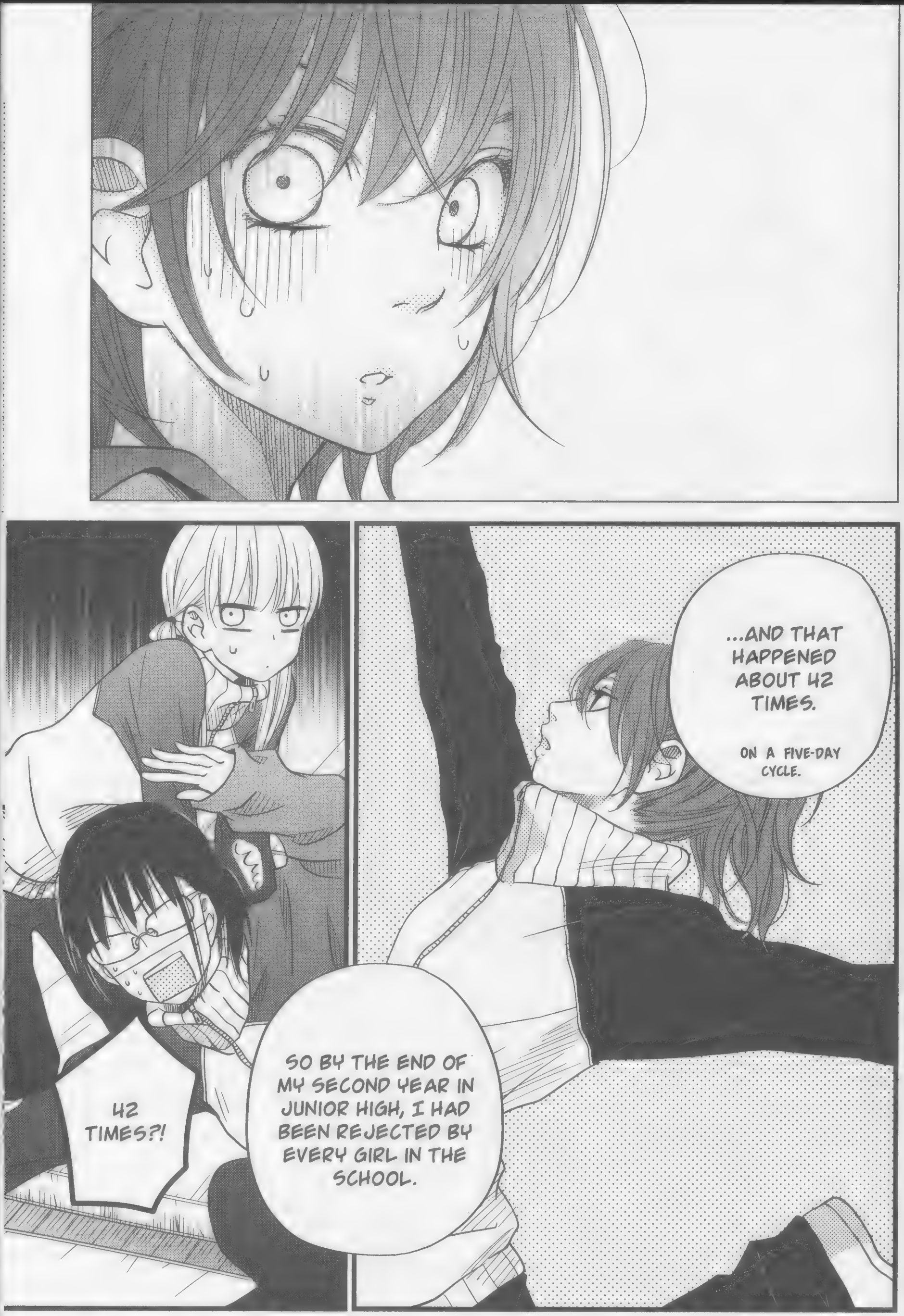

GROWING UP...
...I WAS LOVED BY EVERYONE AROUND ME.
YOU'RE SO CUTE, ASAKO-CHAN!
JUST LIKE A LITTLE DOLL.
~FIVE YEARS OF LOVE~ ASAKO NATSUME
YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD GIRL.
ASAKO, YOU'RE DADDY'S
LITTLE ANGEL!
YES, I HONESTLY BELIEVED ALL THAT.
DADDY DOTED ON ME ENDLESSLY.
EVERYONE ELSE WAS NICE TO ME, TOO.
LOOK AT MY LION DANCE!
FAWN FAWN
ADORABLE!
AH HA HA!
SO CUTE!
MY CHILDHOOD ENDED ALL TOO QUICKLY.
NATSUME-SAAAN!
BYE-BYE!

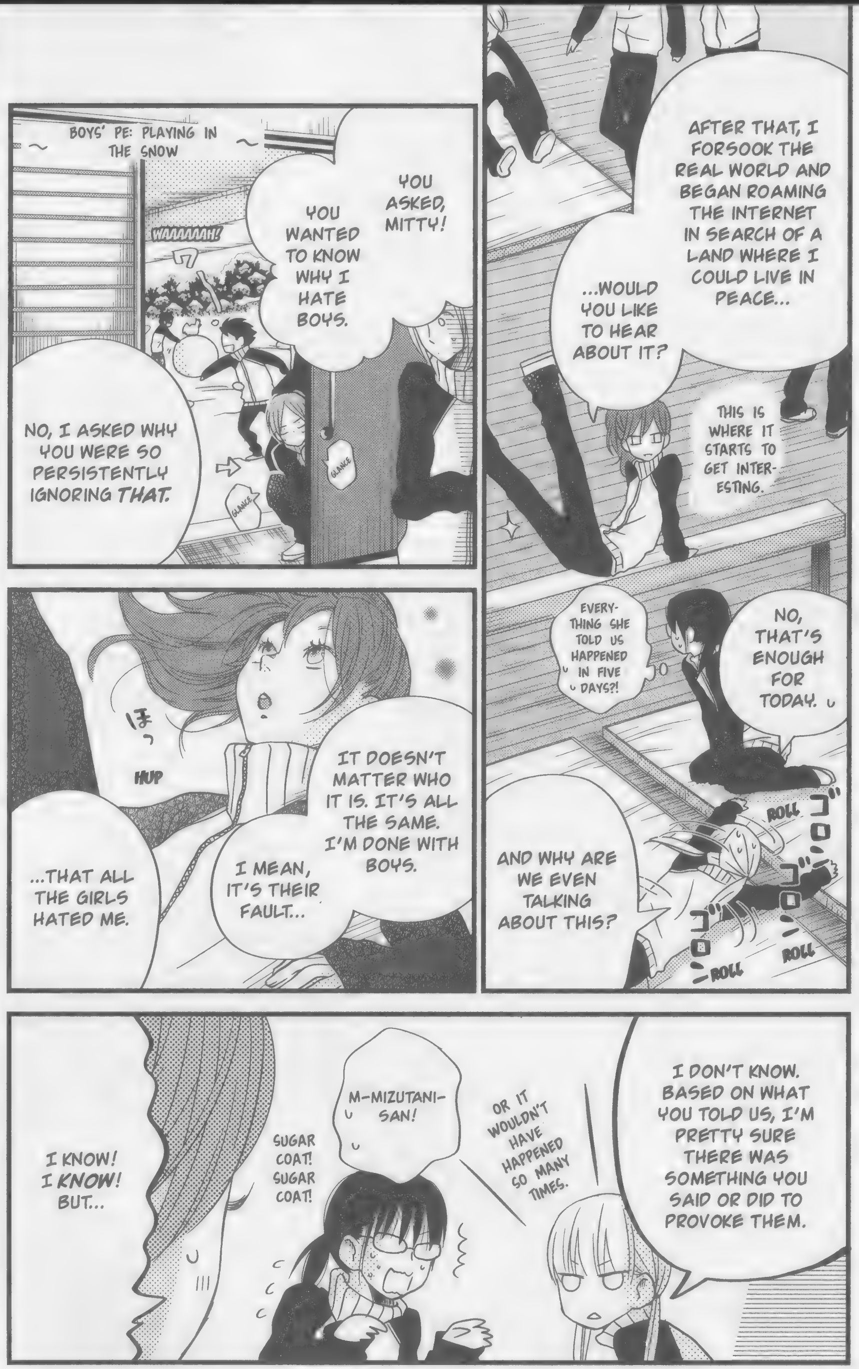

...
NOD...
WOW, NATSUME-CHAN!
THOSE ARE THIRD-YEARS!
YES, I WAS VERY POPULAR WITH THE BOYS.
AT THE TIME, I HAD A BIT OF A FATHER COMPLEX, SO I HAD NO INTEREST IN ROMANCE WHATSOEVER.
I'M SORRY.
I APPRECIATE YOUR FEELINGS.
BUT I LIKE 42-YEAR-OLD MEN WITH NICE BODIES.
THEY LOVED ME SO MUCH,
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
REALLY.
I HEARD EVEN KITANO FROM CLASS 2 ASKED HER OUT.
WHAT? BUT THAT'S MIKI'S CRUSH!
SO IS IT JUST ME... OR DOES THAT ALWAYS HAPPEN TO NATSUME-CHAN?
REMEMBER FIRST YEAR?
...NOT AGAIN.
IT ALWAYS STARTED OUT SO WELL.
BUT EVENTUALLY,
EVERYTHING WOULD GO SOUTH.
...IT'S NOT NATSUME'S FAULT.

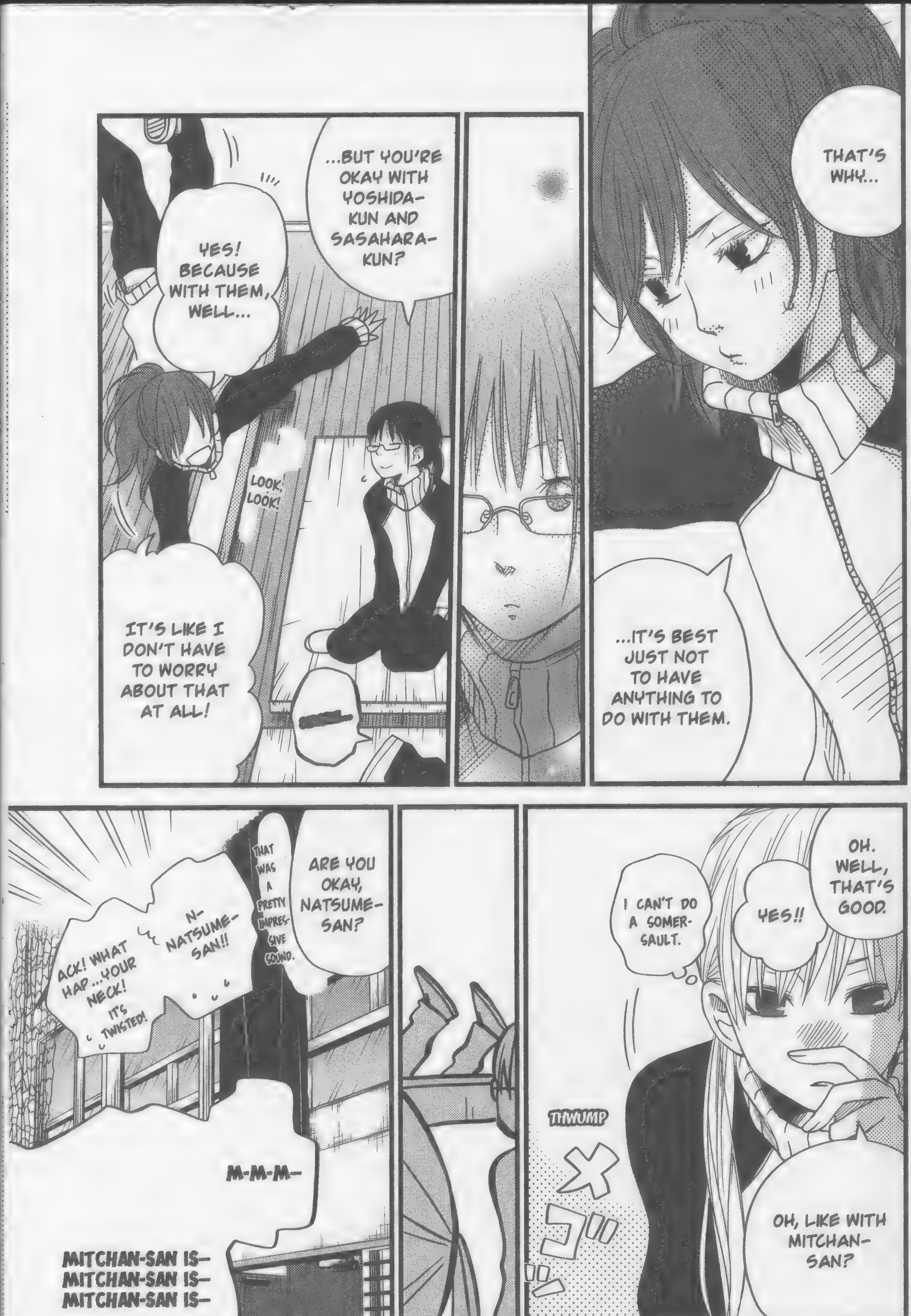

M-MA-KI?!
GO ON, NATSUME. TELL THEM. SPEAK UP FOR YOURSELF.
THIS TIME,
THIS TIME, THIS TIME.
IT WILL WORK OUT THIS TIME!

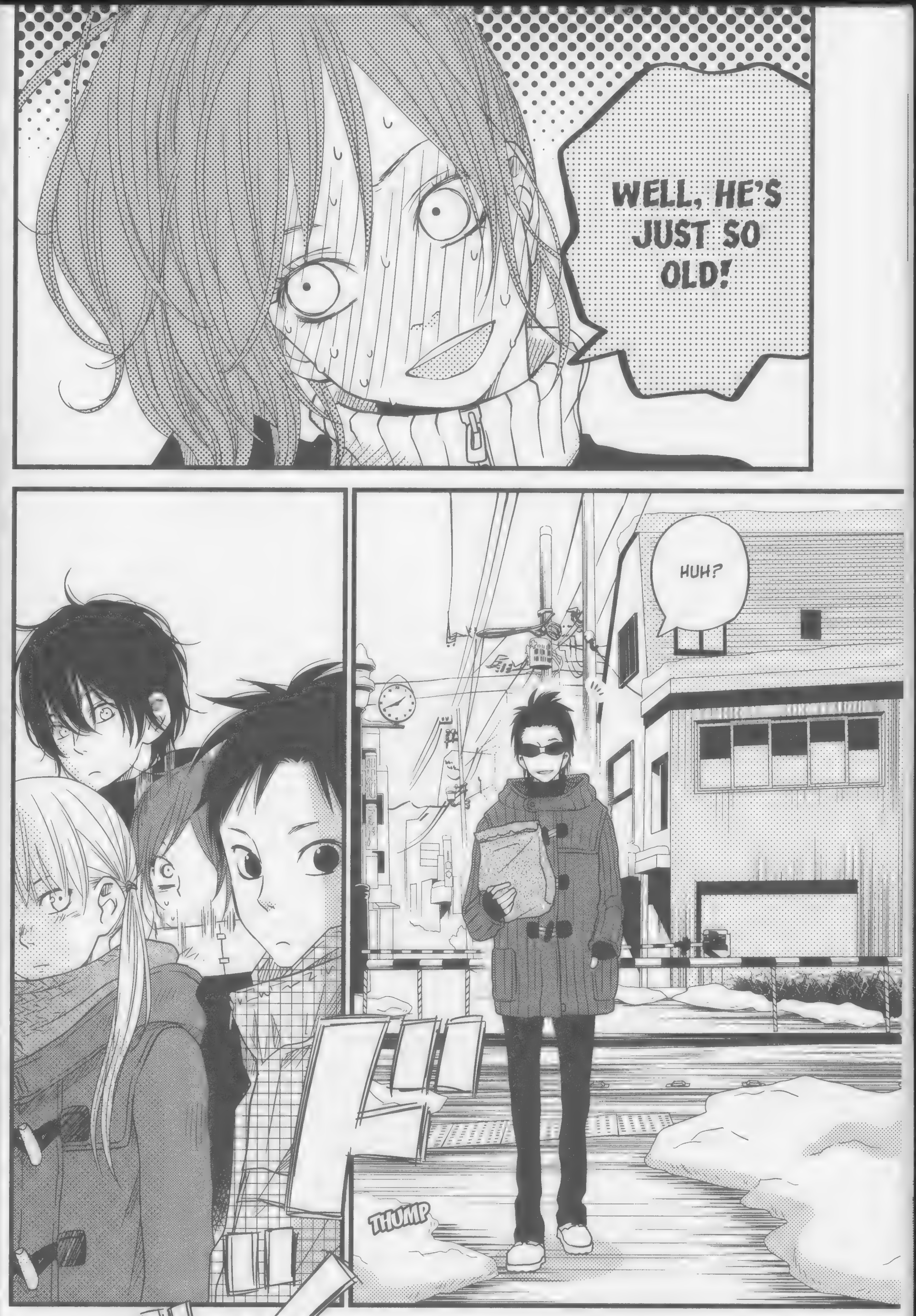

...YOU DON'T HAVE ANY CRUSHES, NATSUME?
WHAT? NO.
I'M NOT REALLY INTER-ESTED IN BOYS.
IF I HAD TO PICK, I'D PICK YOU, MAKI-CHAN
...BUT YOU TALK TO NISHIDA, RIGHT?
BECAUSE YOU LIKE HIM, MAKI-CHAN.
REALLY?
Y...
YES...
2-1 ASAKO NATSUME
22
18

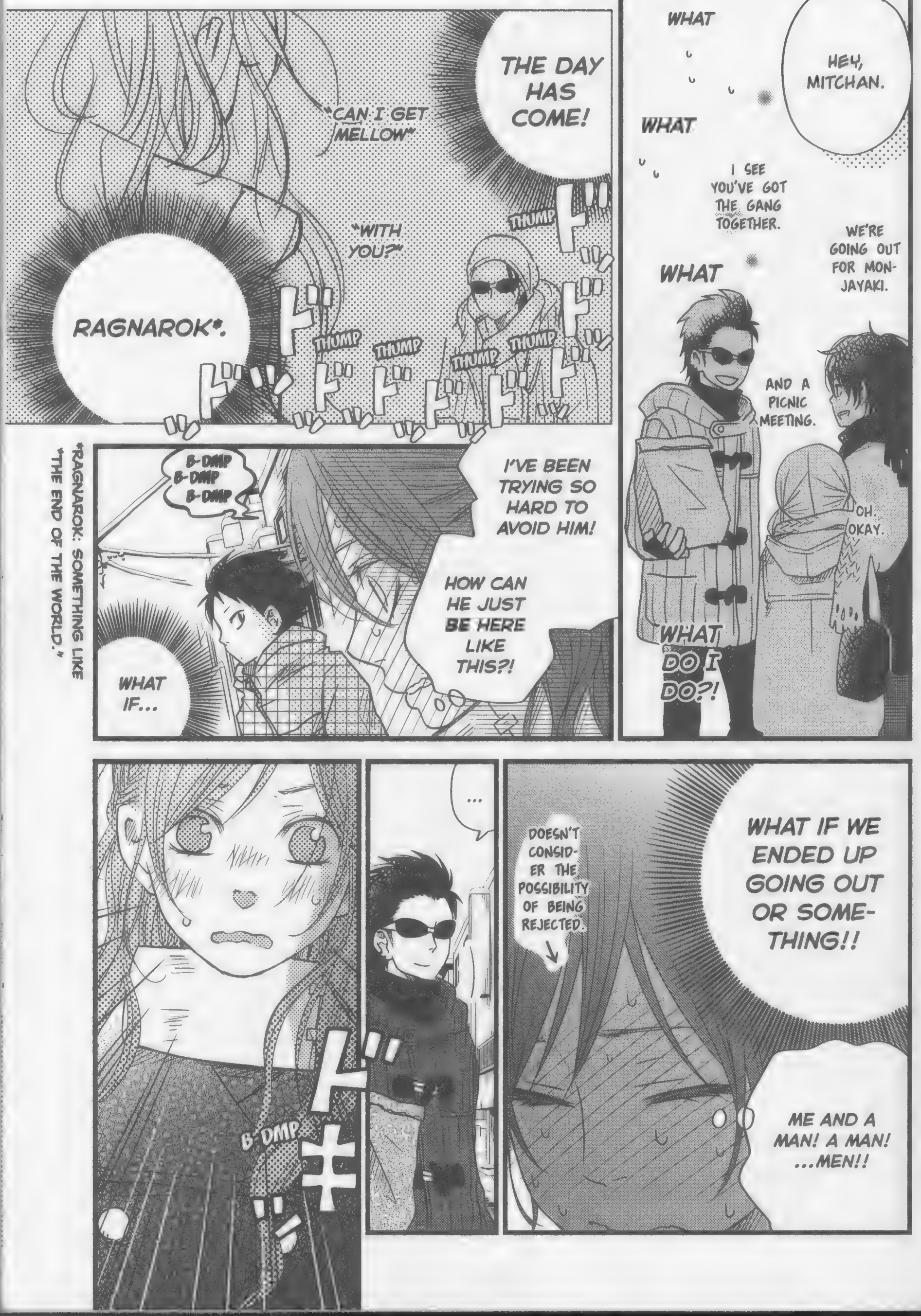

2-2 ASAKO NATSUME


...AND THAT HAPPENED ABOUT 42 TIMES.
ON A FIVE-DAY CYCLE.
SO BY THE END OF MY SECOND YEAR IN JUNIOR HIGH, I HAD BEEN REJECTED BY EVERY GIRL IN THE SCHOOL.
42 TIMES?!

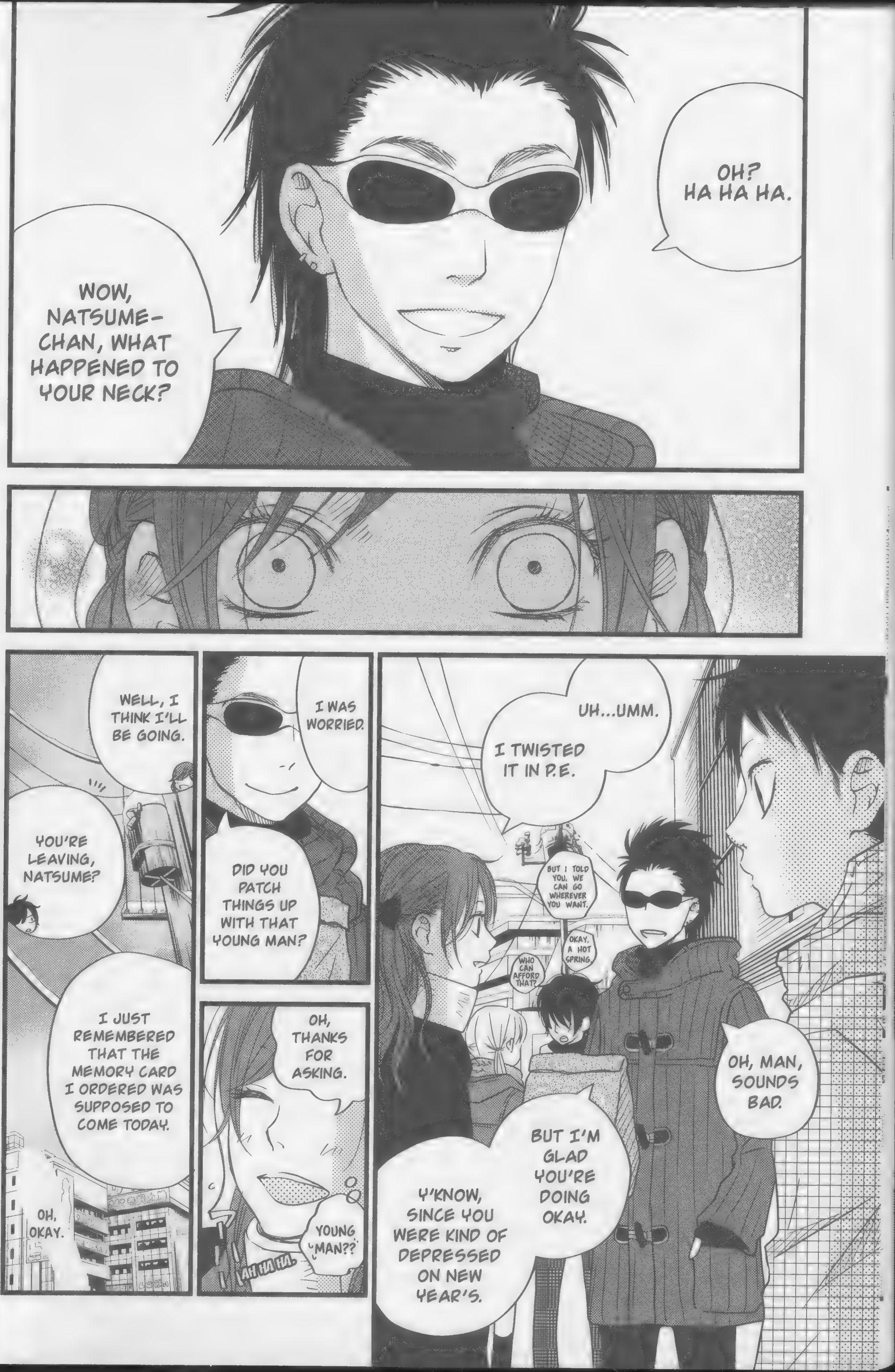

AFTER THAT, I FORSOOK THE REAL WORLD AND BEGAN ROAMING THE INTERNET IN SEARCH OF A LAND WHERE I COULD LIVE IN PEACE...
...WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT IT?
THIS IS WHERE IT STARTS TO GET INTERESTING.
BOYS' PE: PLAYING IN THE SNOW
YOU ASKED, MITTY!
YOU WANTED TO KNOW WHY I HATE BOYS.
WAAAAAAH!
NO, I ASKED WHY YOU WERE SO PERSISTENTLY IGNORING *THAT*.
GLANCE
GLANCE
NO, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY.
EVERYTHING SHE TOLD US HAPPENED IN FIVE DAYS?!
AND WHY ARE WE EVEN TALKING ABOUT THIS?
ゴロン ROLL
ゴロン ROLL
ゴロン ROLL
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO IT IS. IT'S ALL THE SAME. I'M DONE WITH BOYS.
I MEAN, IT'S THEIR FAULT...
...THAT ALL THE GIRLS HATED ME.
ほっ HUP
I DON'T KNOW. BASED ON WHAT YOU TOLD US, I'M PRETTY SURE THERE WAS SOMETHING YOU SAID OR DID TO PROVOKE THEM.
OR IT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED SO MANY TIMES.
M-MIZUTANI-SAN!
SUGAR COAT! SUGAR COAT!
I KNOW! I *KNOW*! BUT...

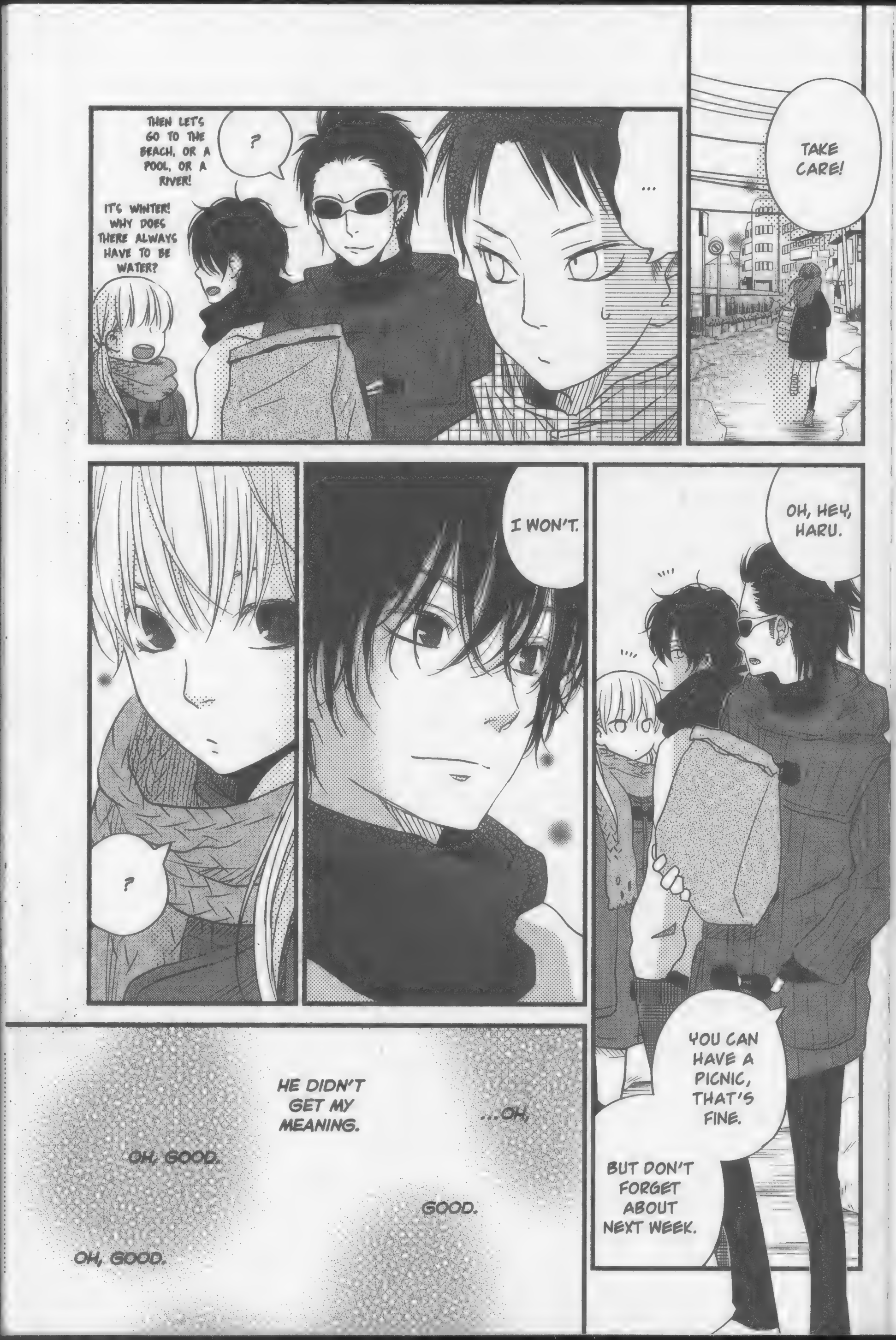

THAT'S WHY...
...IT'S BEST JUST NOT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THEM.
...BUT YOU'RE OKAY WITH YOSHIDA-KUN AND SASAHARA-KUN?
YES! BECAUSE WITH THEM, WELL...
LOOK, LOOK!
IT'S LIKE I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT AT ALL!
OH. WELL, THAT'S GOOD.
YES!!
I CAN'T DO A SOMERSAULT.
OH, LIKE WITH MITCHAN-SAN?
THWUMP
メゴッ
ARE YOU OKAY, NATSUME-SAN?
THAT WAS A PRETTY IMPRESSIVE SOUND.
N-NATSUME-SAN!!
ACK! WHAT HAP...YOUR NECK! IT'S TWISTED!
M-M-M-
MITCHAN-SAN IS-
MITCHAN-SAN IS-
MITCHAN-SAN IS-

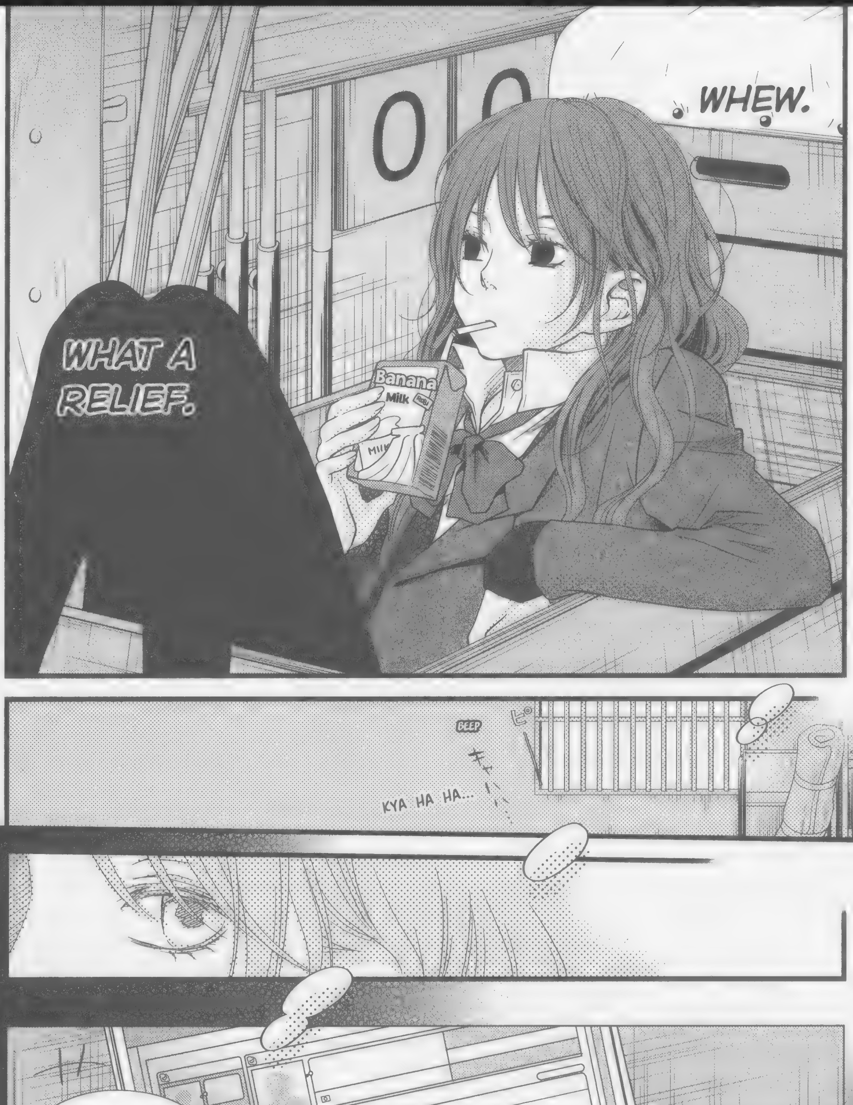

WELL, HE'S JUST SO OLD!
HUH?
THUMP

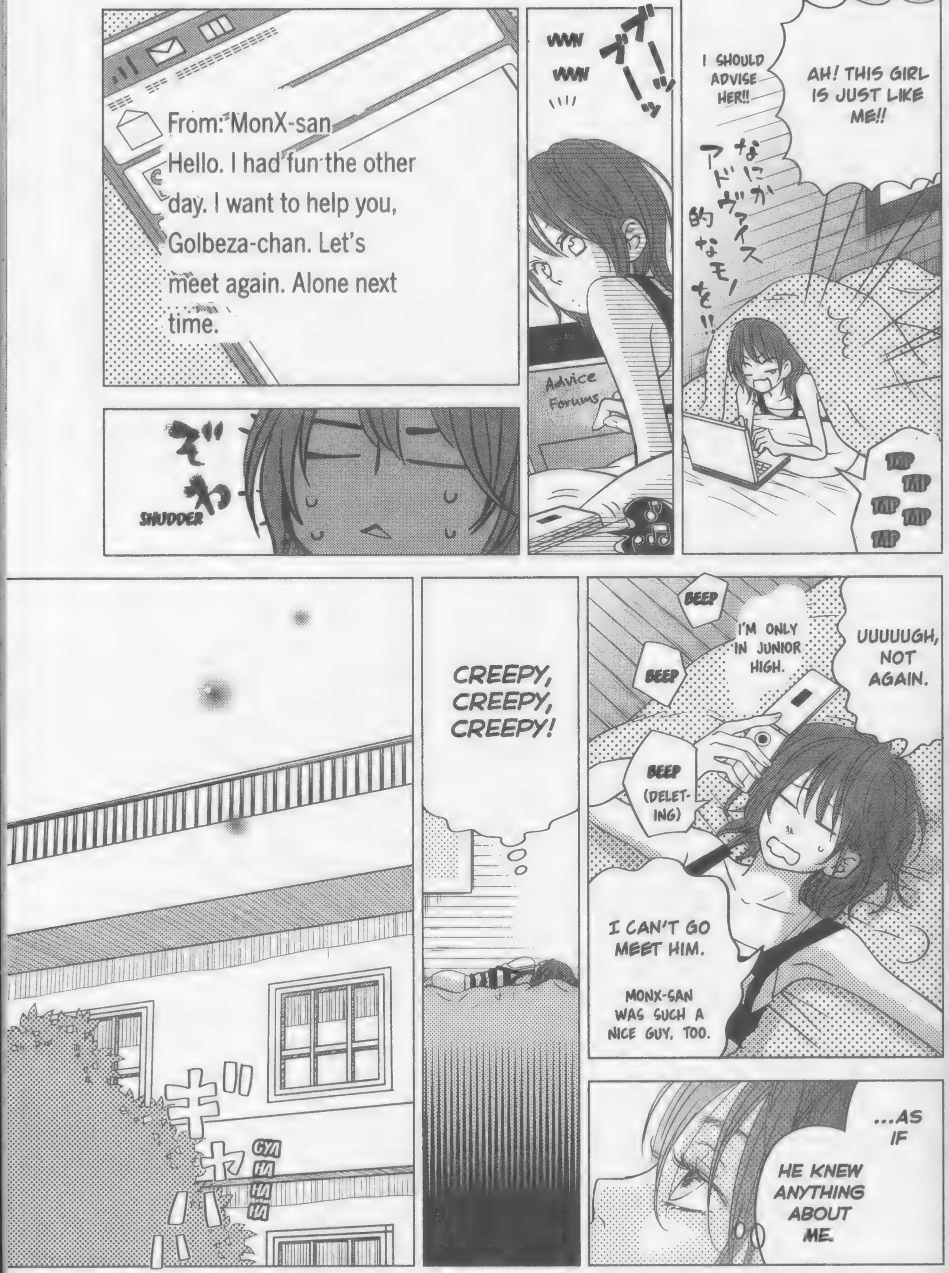

HEY, MITCHAN.
WHAT
WHAT
I SEE YOU'VE GOT THE GANG TOGETHER.
WE'RE GOING OUT FOR MONJAYAKI.
WHAT
AND A PICNIC MEETING.
OH. OKAY.
WHAT DO I DO?!
THE DAY HAS COME!
CAN I GET MELLOW
WITH YOU?
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
RAGNAROK*.
I'VE BEEN TRYING SO HARD TO AVOID HIM!
HOW CAN HE JUST BE HERE LIKE THIS?!
B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP
WHAT IF...
WHAT IF WE ENDED UP GOING OUT OR SOMETHING!!
ME AND A MAN! A MAN! ...MEN!!
...
DOESN'T CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING REJECTED.
B-DMP

*RAGNAROK: SOMETHING LIKE "THE END OF THE WORLD."


OH? HA HA HA.
WOW, NATSUME-CHAN, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR NECK?
UH...UMM.
I TWISTED IT IN P.E.
BUT I TOLD YOU, WE CAN GO WHEREVER YOU WANT.
OKAY, A HOT SPRING.
WHO CAN AFFORD THAT?
OH, MAN, SOUNDS BAD.
BUT I'M GLAD YOU'RE DOING OKAY.
Y'KNOW, SINCE YOU WERE KIND OF DEPRESSED ON NEW YEAR'S.
I WAS WORRIED.
DID YOU PATCH THINGS UP WITH THAT YOUNG MAN?
OH, THANKS FOR ASKING.
YOUNG MAN??
AH HA HA.
WELL, I THINK I'LL BE GOING.
YOU'RE LEAVING, NATSUME?
I JUST REMEMBERED THAT THE MEMORY CARD I ORDERED WAS SUPPOSED TO COME TODAY.
OH, OKAY.

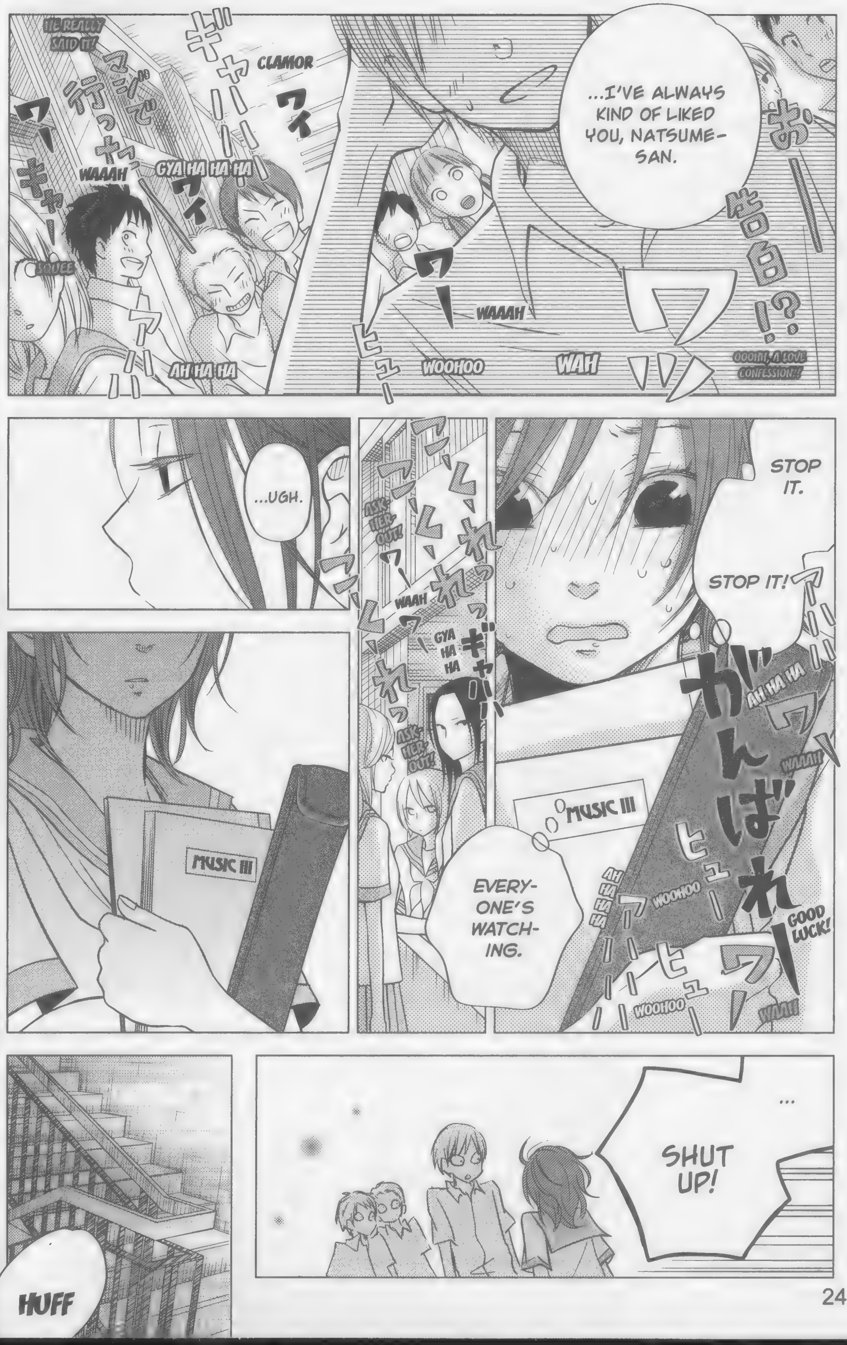

TAKE CARE!
...
?
THEN LET'S GO TO THE BEACH, OR A POOL, OR A RIVER!
IT'S WINTER! WHY DOES THERE ALWAYS HAVE TO BE WATER?
OH, HEY, HARU.
YOU CAN HAVE A PICNIC, THAT'S FINE.
BUT DON'T FORGET ABOUT NEXT WEEK.
I WON'T.
?
...OH,
HE DIDN'T GET MY MEANING.
OH, GOOD.
GOOD.
OH, GOOD.

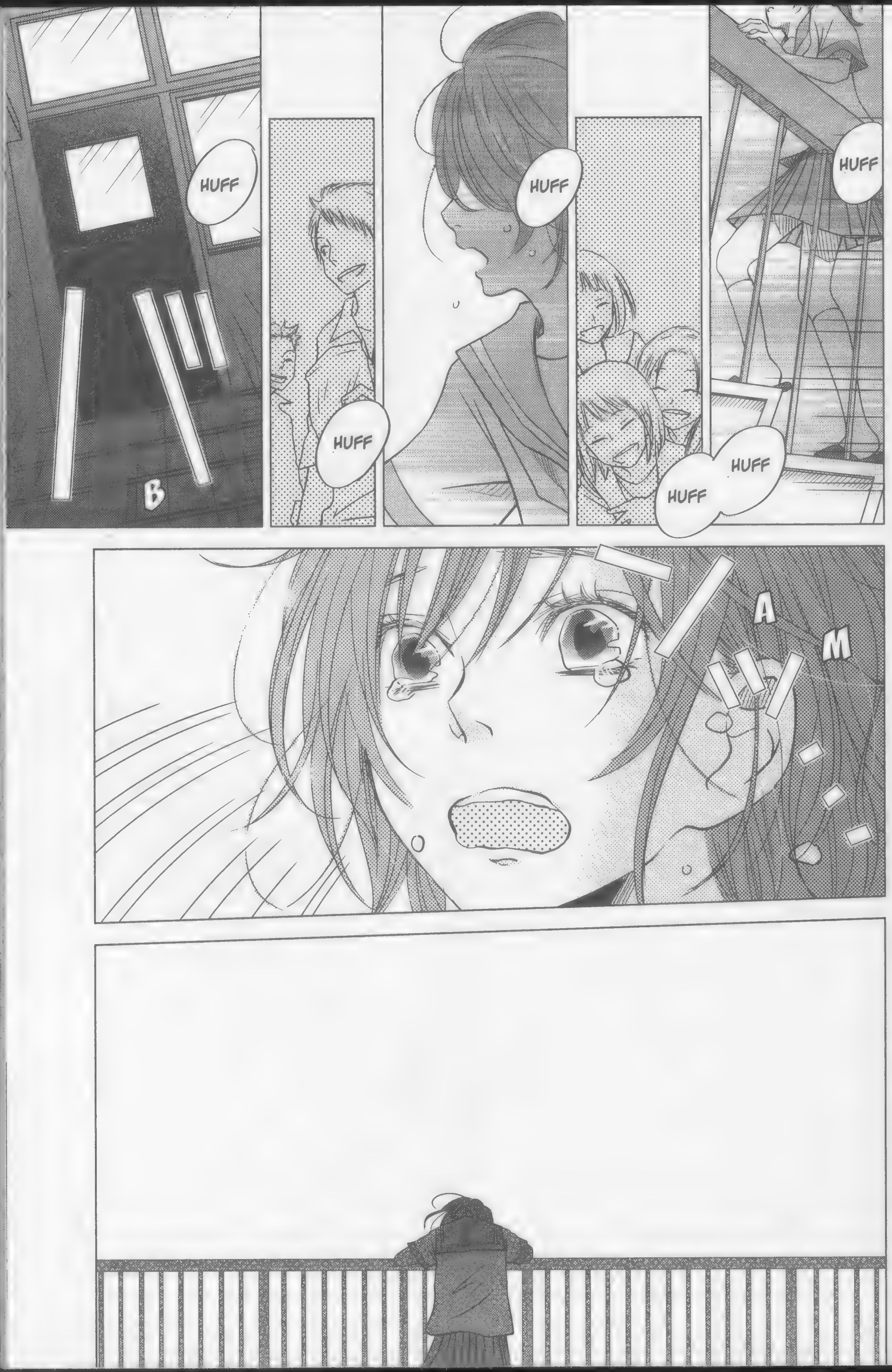

WHEW.
WHAT A RELIEF.
Banana Milk
BEEP
ピ
キャハハ
KYA HA HA...
KYA HA HA! RUSTEDIRON-MASK IS SO FUNNY!

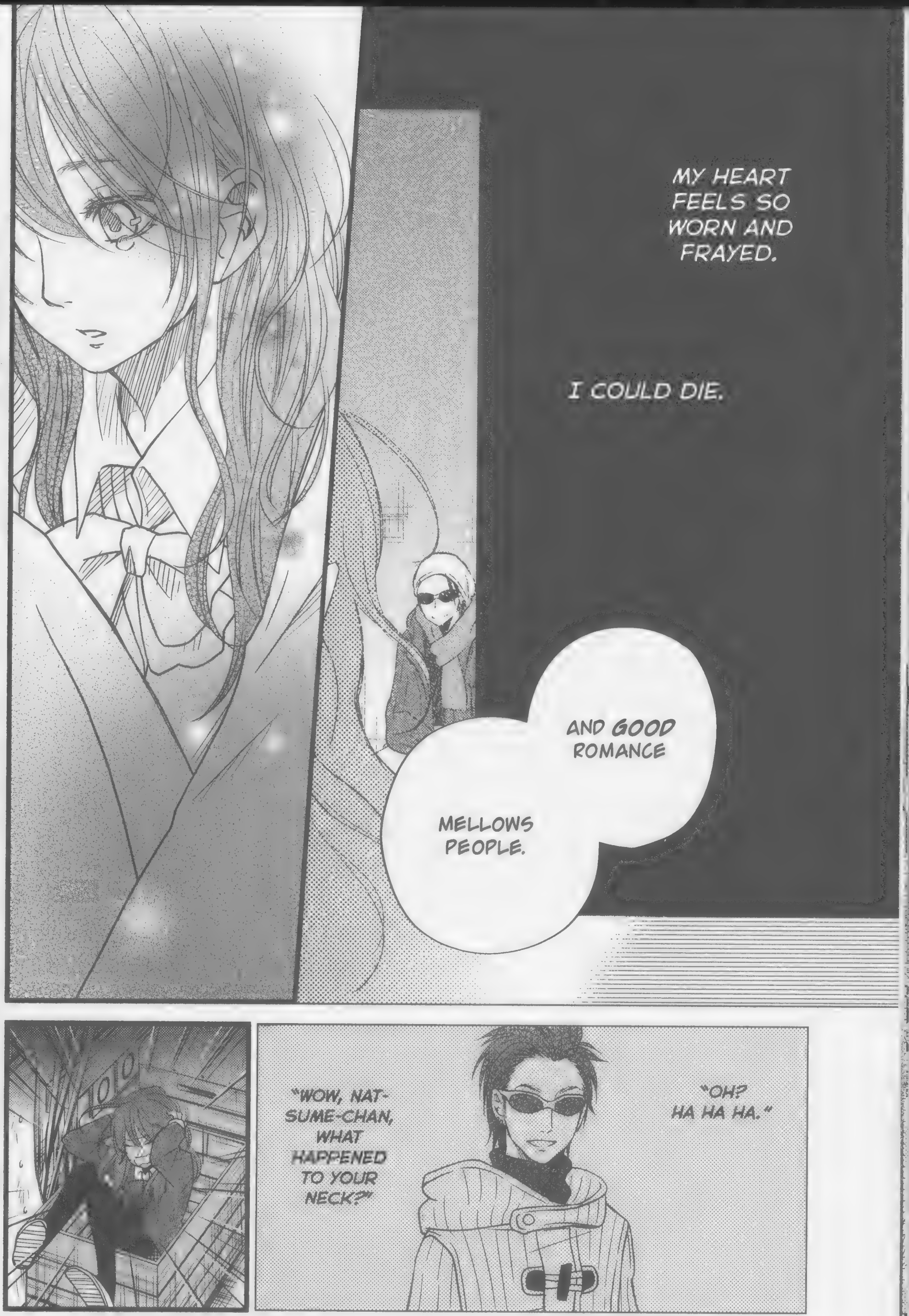

AH! THIS GIRL IS JUST LIKE ME!!
I SHOULD ADVISE HER!!
なにかアドヴァイス的なモノを!!
TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP
ブーッブーッ
VVVN VVVN
Advice Forums

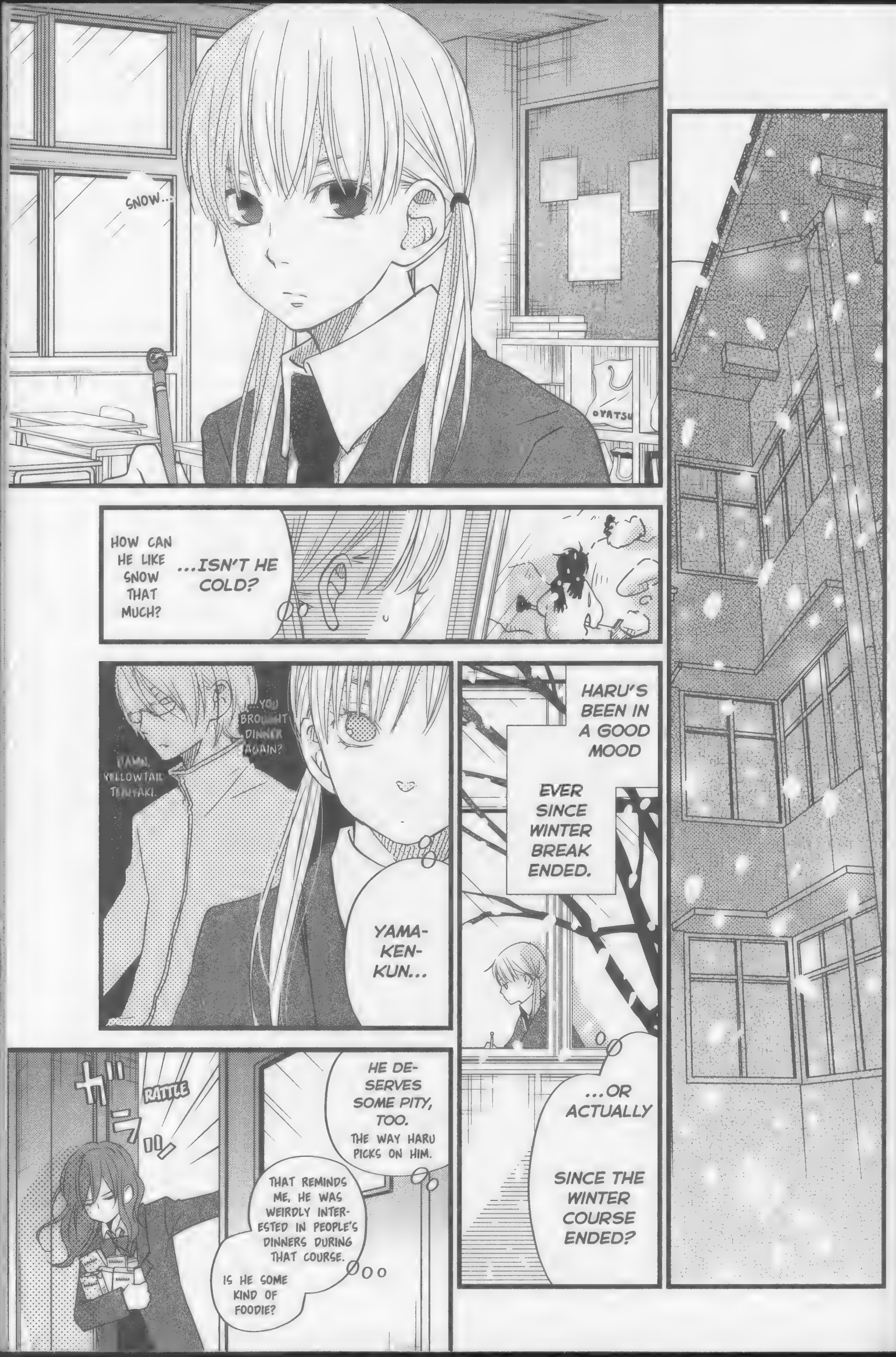
From: MonX-san
Hello. I had fun the other day. I want to help you, Golbeza-chan. Let's meet again. Alone next time.

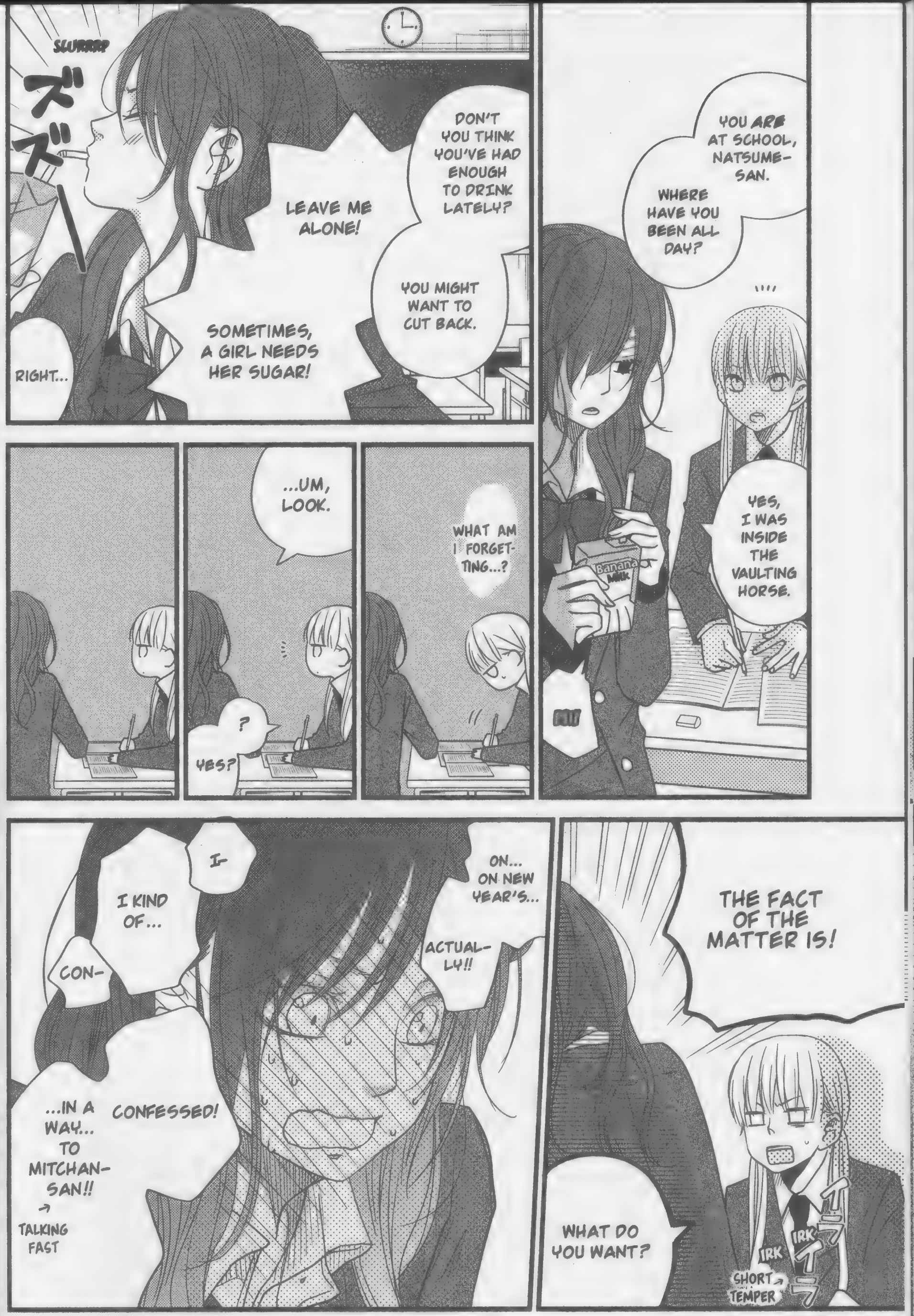
ぞわ
SHUDDER
UUUUUGH, NOT AGAIN.
I'M ONLY IN JUNIOR HIGH.
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP (DELETING)
I CAN'T GO MEET HIM.
MONX-SAN WAS SUCH A NICE GUY, TOO.
...AS IF HE KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT ME.
CREEPY, CREEPY, CREEPY!
ギャハハ
GYA HA HA HA

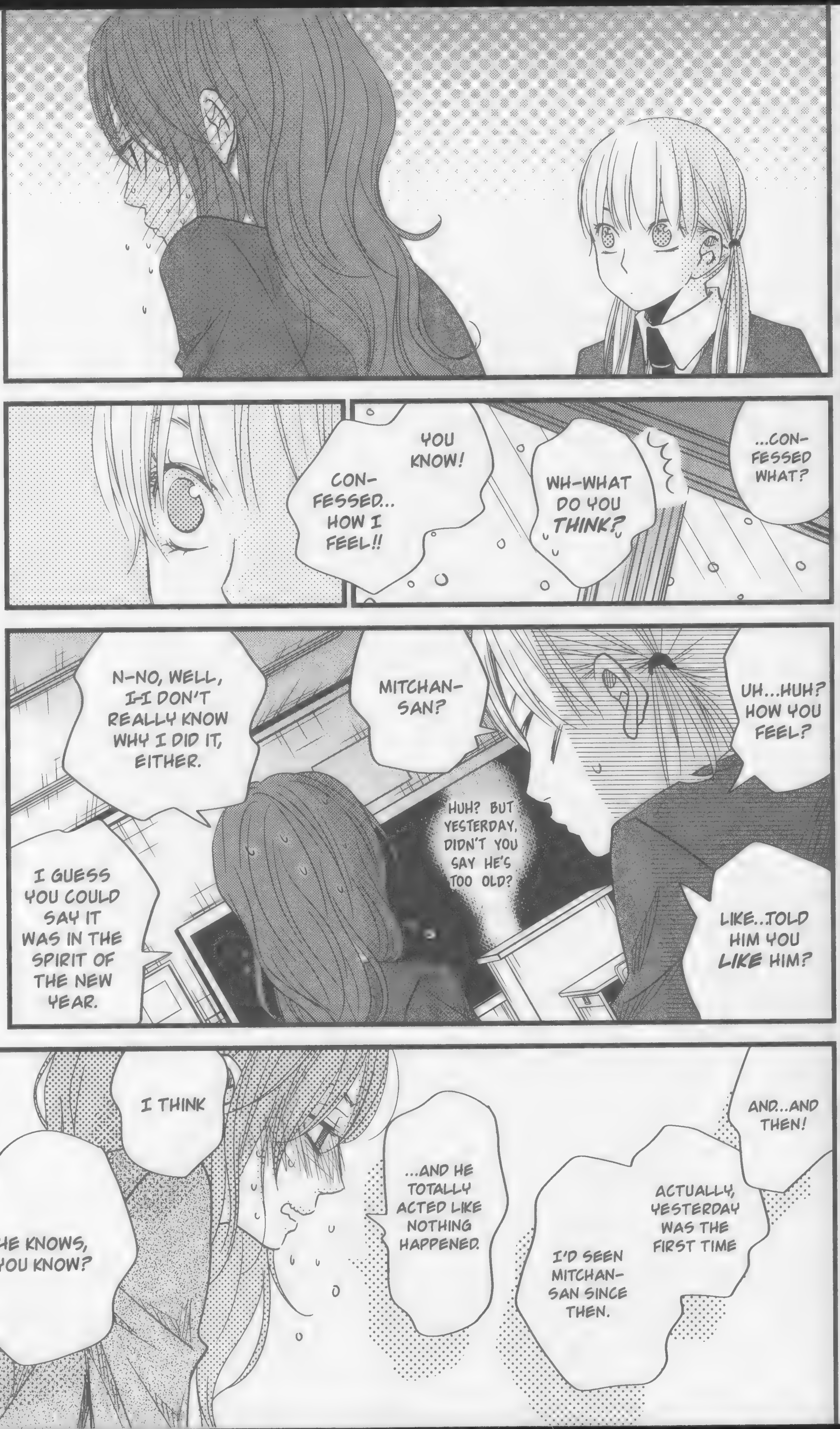

OOOH, A LOVE CONFESSION?!
...I'VE ALWAYS KIND OF LIKED YOU, NATSUME-SAN.
WAH
WOOHOO
WAAAH
CLAMOR
HE REALLY SAID IT!
GYA HA HA HA
WAAAH
SQUEE
AH HA HA
STOP IT.
STOP IT!
AH HA HA
WAAAH
GOOD LUCK!
WAAH
WOOHOO
WOOHOO
AH HA HA HA
EVERY-ONE'S WATCHING.
MUSIC III
ASK-HER-OUT!
WAAH
GYA HA HA
ASK-HER-OUT!
...UGH.
MUSIC III
...
SHUT UP!
HUFF

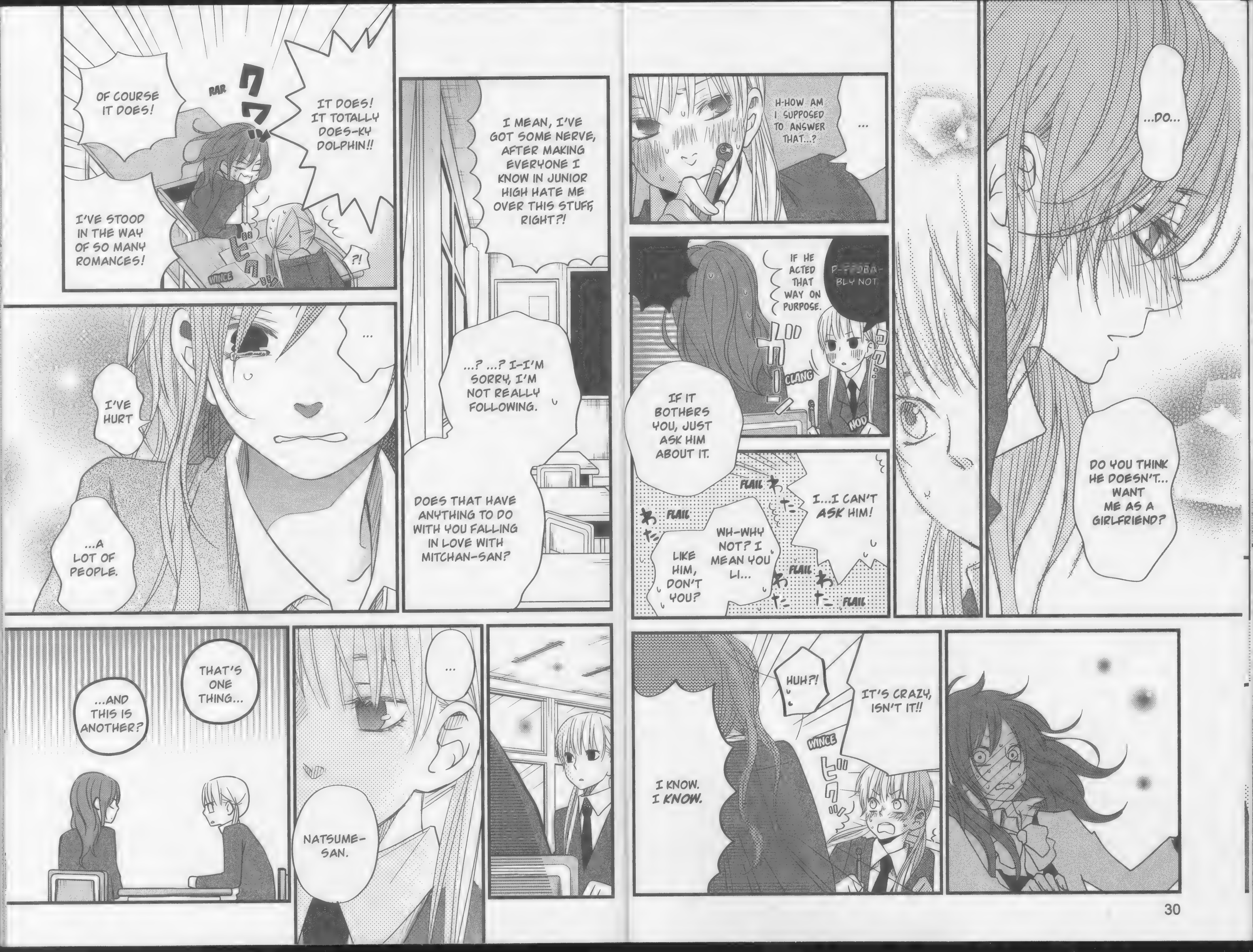

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
B
A
M

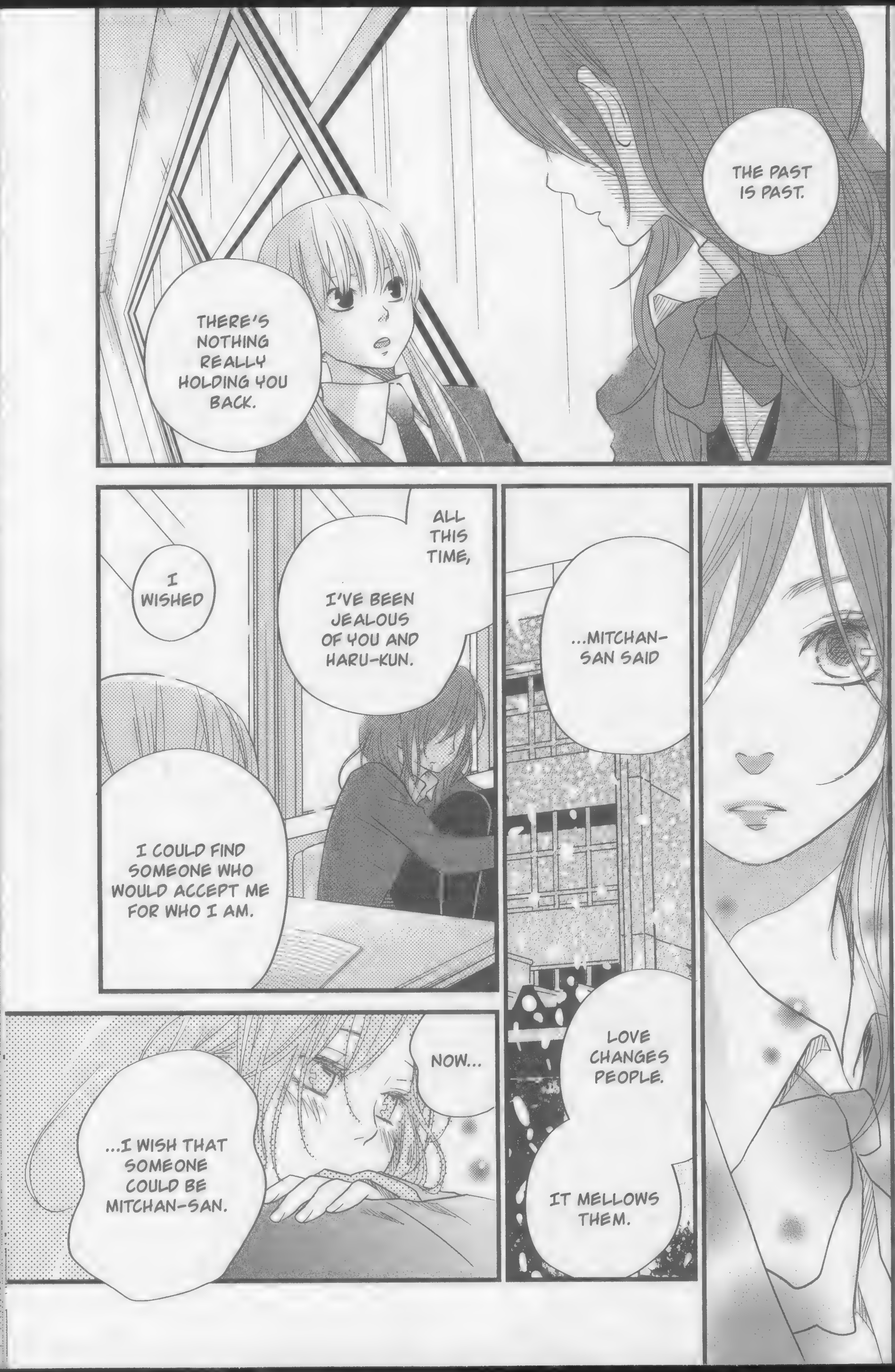

MY HEART FEELS SO WORN AND FRAYED.
I COULD DIE.
AND GOOD ROMANCE
MELLOWS PEOPLE.
"OH? HA HA HA."
"WOW, NAT-SUME-CHAN, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR NECK?"

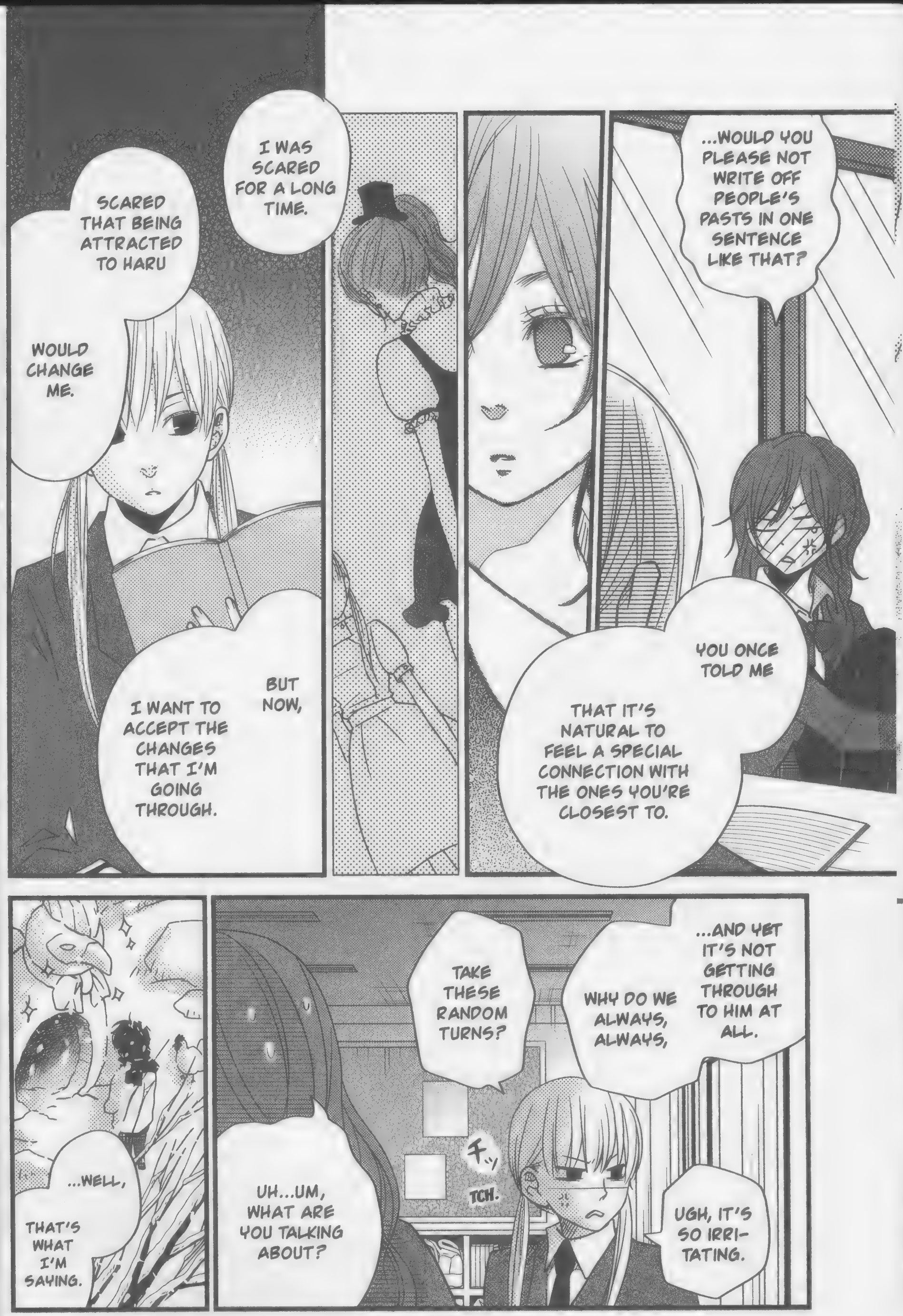

SNOW...
...ISN'T HE COLD?
HOW CAN HE LIKE SNOW THAT MUCH?
HARU'S BEEN IN A GOOD MOOD
EVER SINCE WINTER BREAK ENDED.
...OR ACTUALLY
SINCE THE WINTER COURSE ENDED?
...YOU BROUGHT DINNER AGAIN?
DAMN. YELLOWTAIL TERIYAKI.
YAMA-KEN-KUN...
ガラッ
RATTLE
HE DE-SERVES SOME PITY, TOO.
THE WAY HARU PICKS ON HIM.
THAT REMINDS ME, HE WAS WEIRDLY INTER-ESTED IN PEOPLE'S DINNERS DURING THAT COURSE.
IS HE SOME KIND OF FOODIE?

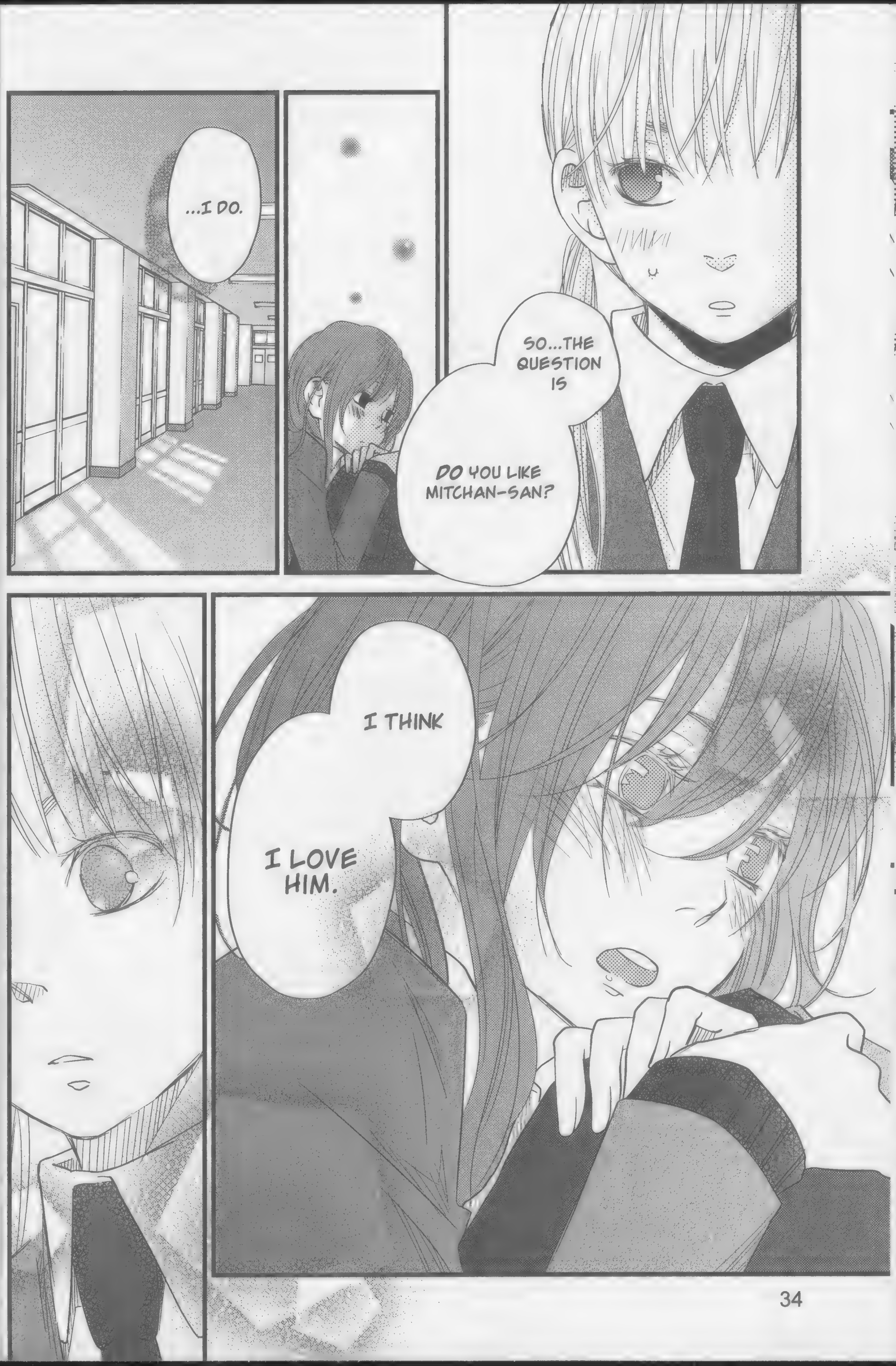

YOU ARE AT SCHOOL, NATSUME-SAN.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL DAY?
...
YES, I WAS INSIDE THE VAULTING HORSE.
Banana Milk
MU
DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH TO DRINK LATELY?
LEAVE ME ALONE!
YOU MIGHT WANT TO CUT BACK.
SOMETIMES, A GIRL NEEDS HER SUGAR!
SLURRRP ズズー
RIGHT...
WHAT AM I FORGETTING...?
...UM, LOOK.
?
YES?
THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
IRK IRK イラ イラ
SHORT → TEMPER
ON... ON NEW YEAR'S...
ACTUALLY!!
I-
I KIND OF...
CON-
CONFESSED!
...IN A WAY... TO MITCHAN-SAN!!
→ TALKING FAST

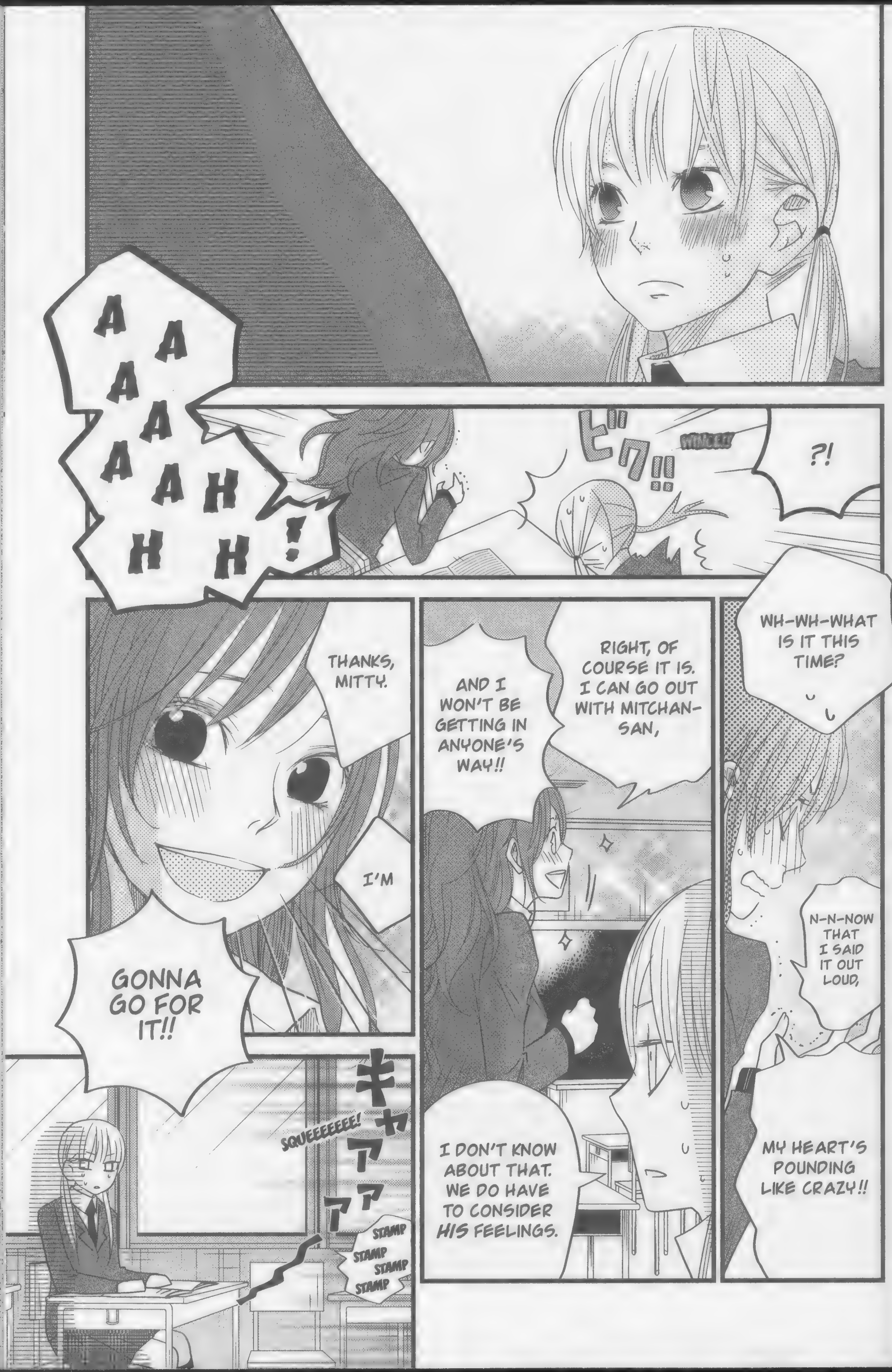

...CONFESSED WHAT?
WH-WHAT DO YOU THINK?
YOU KNOW!
CONFESSED... HOW I FEEL!!
UH...HUH? HOW YOU FEEL?
LIKE..TOLD HIM YOU LIKE HIM?
MITCHAN-SAN?
HUH? BUT YESTERDAY, DIDN'T YOU SAY HE'S TOO OLD?
N-NO, WELL, I-I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHY I DID IT, EITHER.
I GUESS YOU COULD SAY IT WAS IN THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW YEAR.
AND...AND THEN!
ACTUALLY, YESTERDAY WAS THE FIRST TIME
I'D SEEN MITCHAN-SAN SINCE THEN.
...AND HE TOTALLY ACTED LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED.
I THINK
HE KNOWS, YOU KNOW?

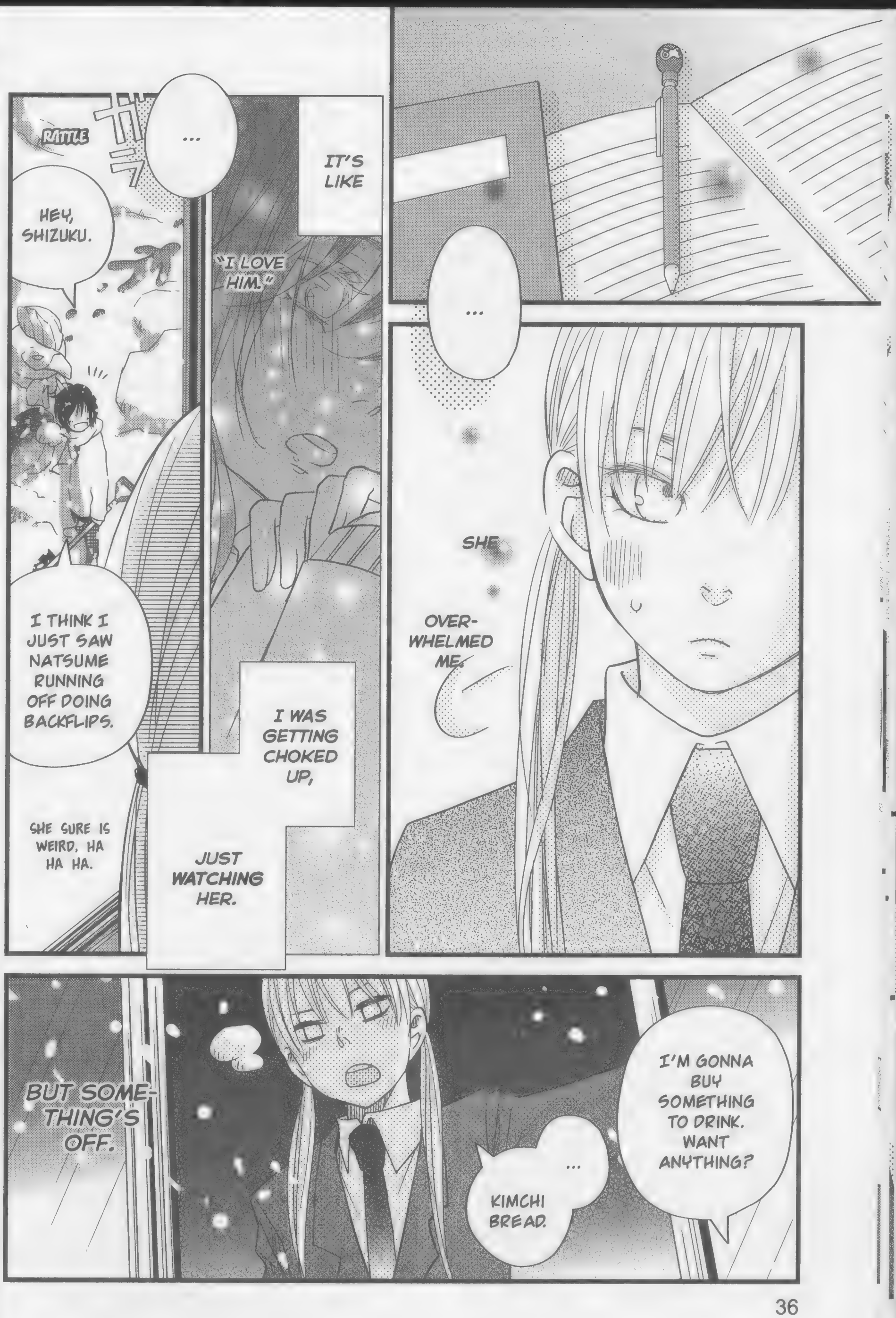

...DO...
DO YOU THINK HE DOESN'T... WANT ME AS A GIRLFRIEND?
...
H-HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO ANSWER THAT...?
P-PROBABLY NOT.
IF HE ACTED THAT WAY ON PURPOSE.
CLANG
NOD
IF IT BOTHERS YOU, JUST ASK HIM ABOUT IT.
I...I CAN'T ASK HIM!
WH-WHY NOT? I MEAN YOU LI...
LIKE HIM, DON'T YOU?
FLAIL
FLAIL
FLAIL
FLAIL
IT'S CRAZY, ISN'T IT!!
HUH?!
WINCE
I KNOW. *I KNOW.*
I MEAN, I'VE GOT SOME NERVE, AFTER MAKING EVERYONE I KNOW IN JUNIOR HIGH HATE ME OVER THIS STUFF, RIGHT?!
...? ...? I-I'M SORRY, I'M NOT REALLY FOLLOWING.
DOES THAT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU FALLING IN LOVE WITH MITCHAN-SAN?
IT DOES! IT TOTALLY DOES-KY DOLPHIN!!
RAR
OF COURSE IT DOES!
I'VE STOOD IN THE WAY OF SO MANY ROMANCES!
?!
WINCE
...
I'VE HURT
...A LOT OF PEOPLE.
...
NATSUME-SAN.
THAT'S ONE THING...
...AND THIS IS ANOTHER?

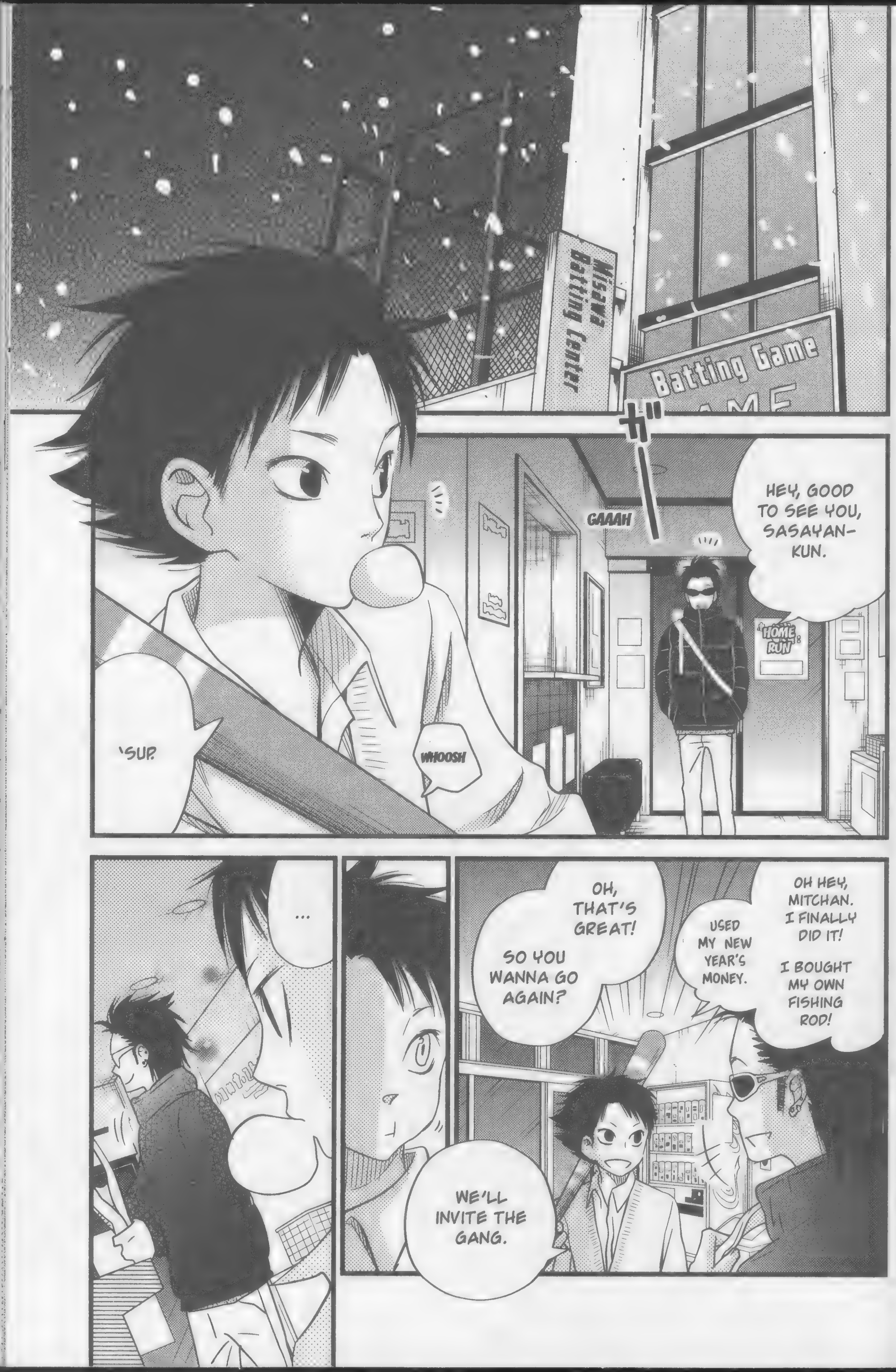

THE PAST IS PAST.
THERE'S NOTHING REALLY HOLDING YOU BACK.
...MITCHAN-SAN SAID
LOVE CHANGES PEOPLE.
IT MELLOWS THEM.
ALL THIS TIME,
I'VE BEEN JEALOUS OF YOU AND HARU-KUN.
I WISHED
I COULD FIND SOMEONE WHO WOULD ACCEPT ME FOR WHO I AM.
NOW...
...I WISH THAT SOMEONE COULD BE MITCHAN-SAN.

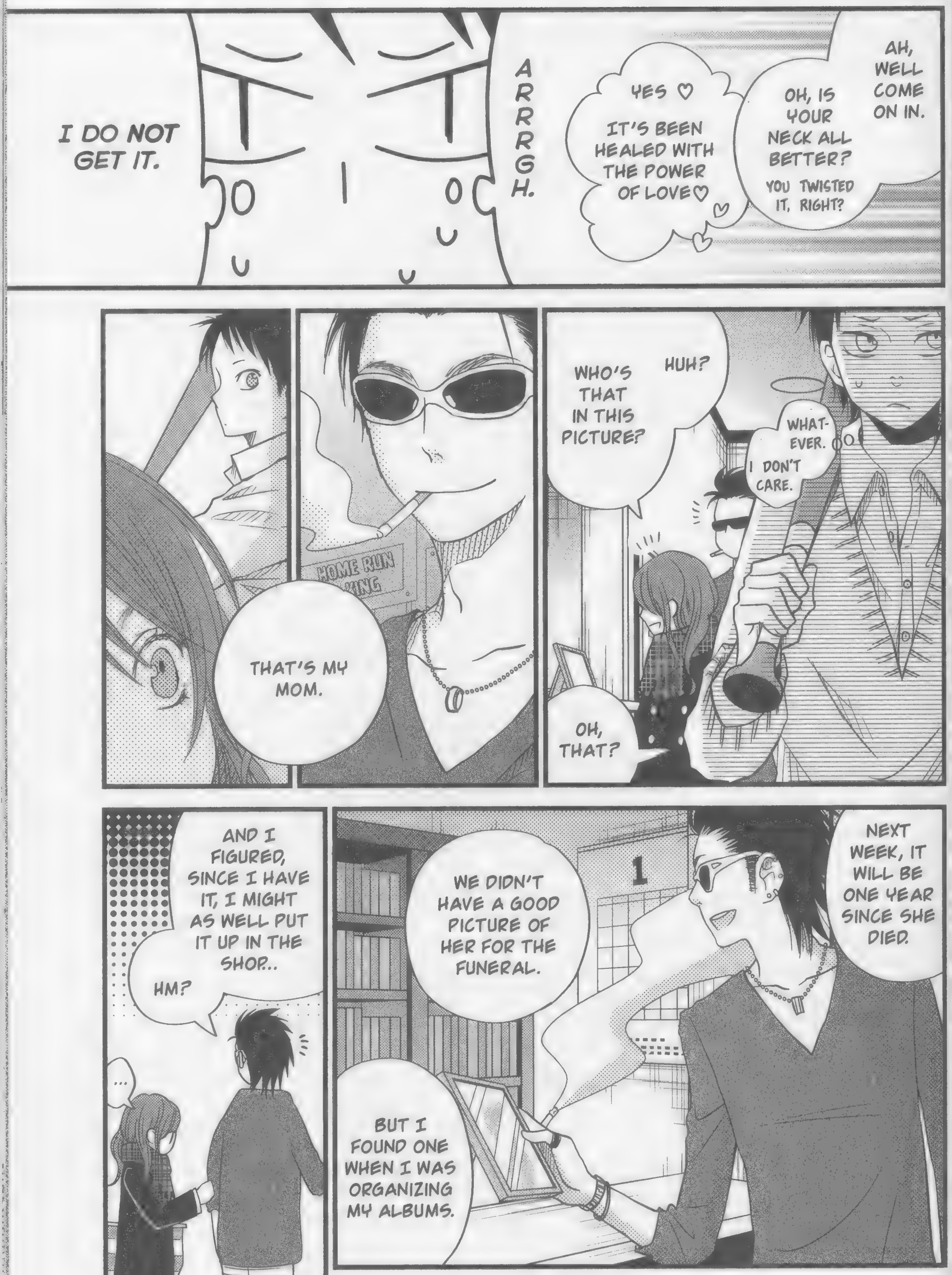

...WOULD YOU PLEASE NOT WRITE OFF PEOPLE'S PASTS IN ONE SENTENCE LIKE THAT?
YOU ONCE TOLD ME
THAT IT'S NATURAL TO FEEL A SPECIAL CONNECTION WITH THE ONES YOU'RE CLOSEST TO.
I WAS SCARED FOR A LONG TIME.
SCARED THAT BEING ATTRACTED TO HARU
WOULD CHANGE ME.
BUT NOW,
I WANT TO ACCEPT THE CHANGES THAT I'M GOING THROUGH.
...AND YET IT'S NOT GETTING THROUGH TO HIM AT ALL.
WHY DO WE ALWAYS, ALWAYS,
TAKE THESE RANDOM TURNS?
チッ
TCH.
UGH, IT'S SO IRRITATING.
UH...UM, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
...WELL,
THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING.

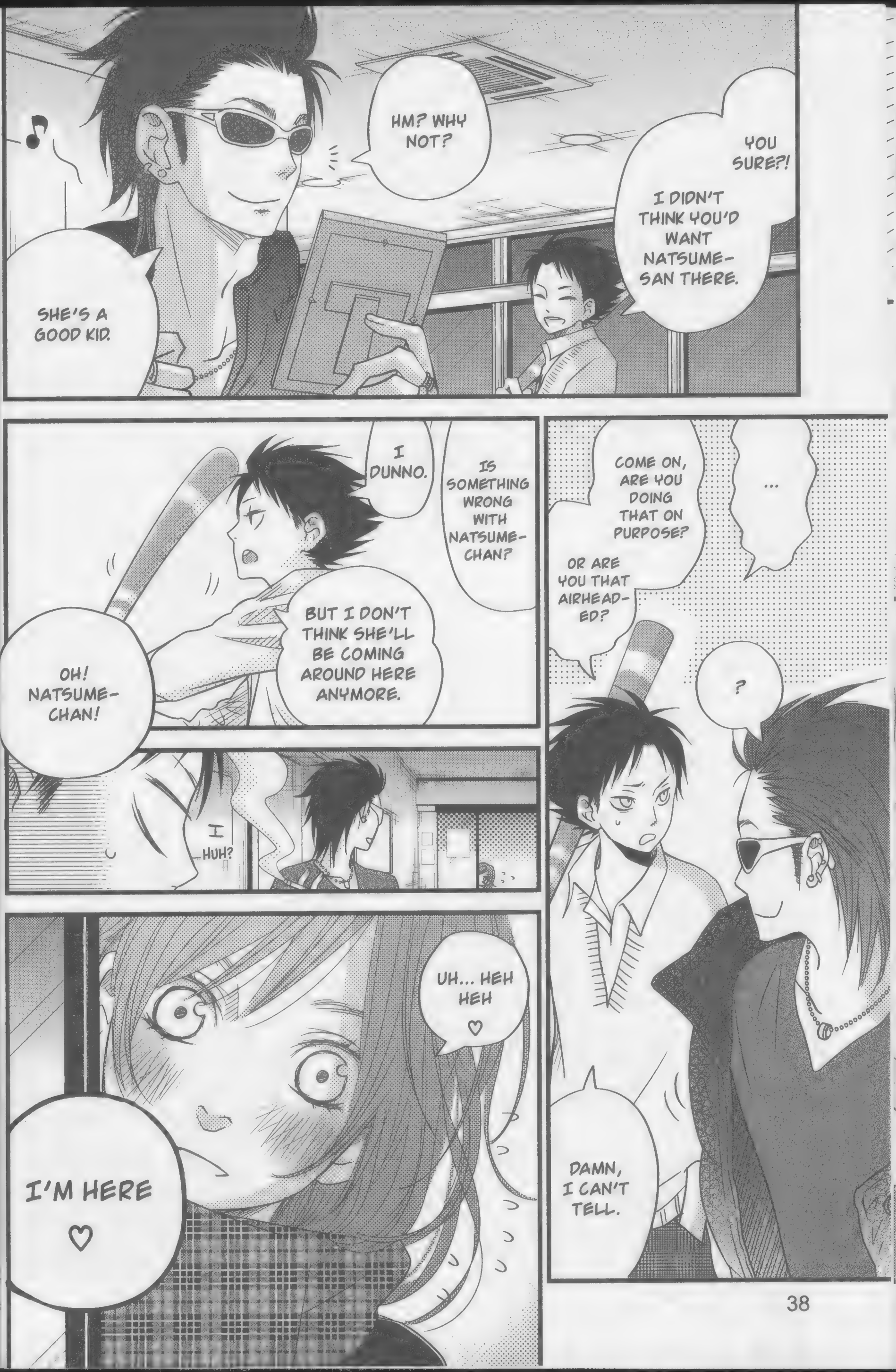

SO...THE QUESTION IS
DO YOU LIKE MITCHAN-SAN?
...I DO.
I THINK
I LOVE HIM.

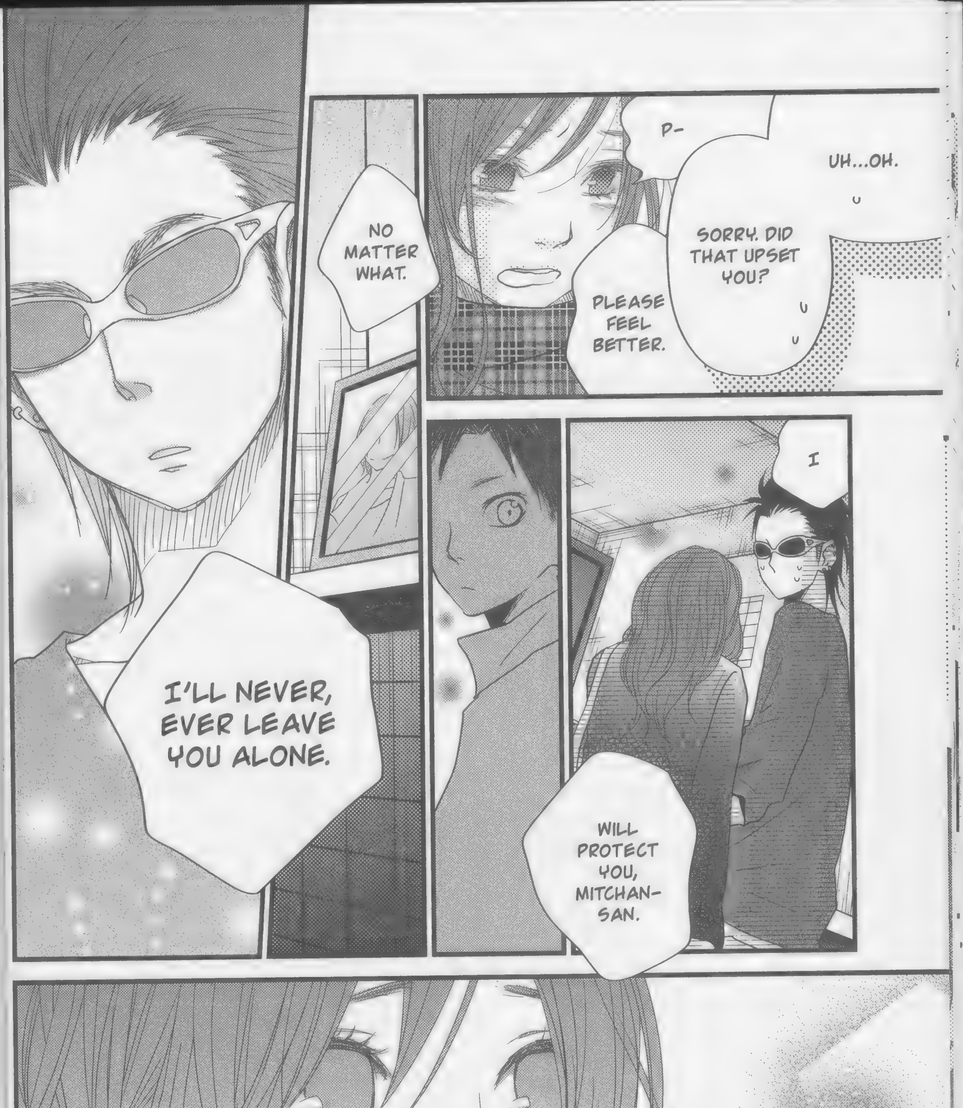

AAAAAAAHHH!
ビクッ!! WINCE!!
?!
WH-WH-WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?
N-N-NOW THAT I SAID IT OUT LOUD,
MY HEART'S POUNDING LIKE CRAZY!!
RIGHT, OF COURSE IT IS. I CAN GO OUT WITH MITCHAN-SAN,
AND I WON'T BE GETTING IN ANYONE'S WAY!!
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. WE DO HAVE TO CONSIDER *HIS* FEELINGS.
THANKS, MITTY.
I'M
GONNA GO FOR IT!!
キャアアア SQUEEEEEEE!
STAMP STAMP STAMP STAMP

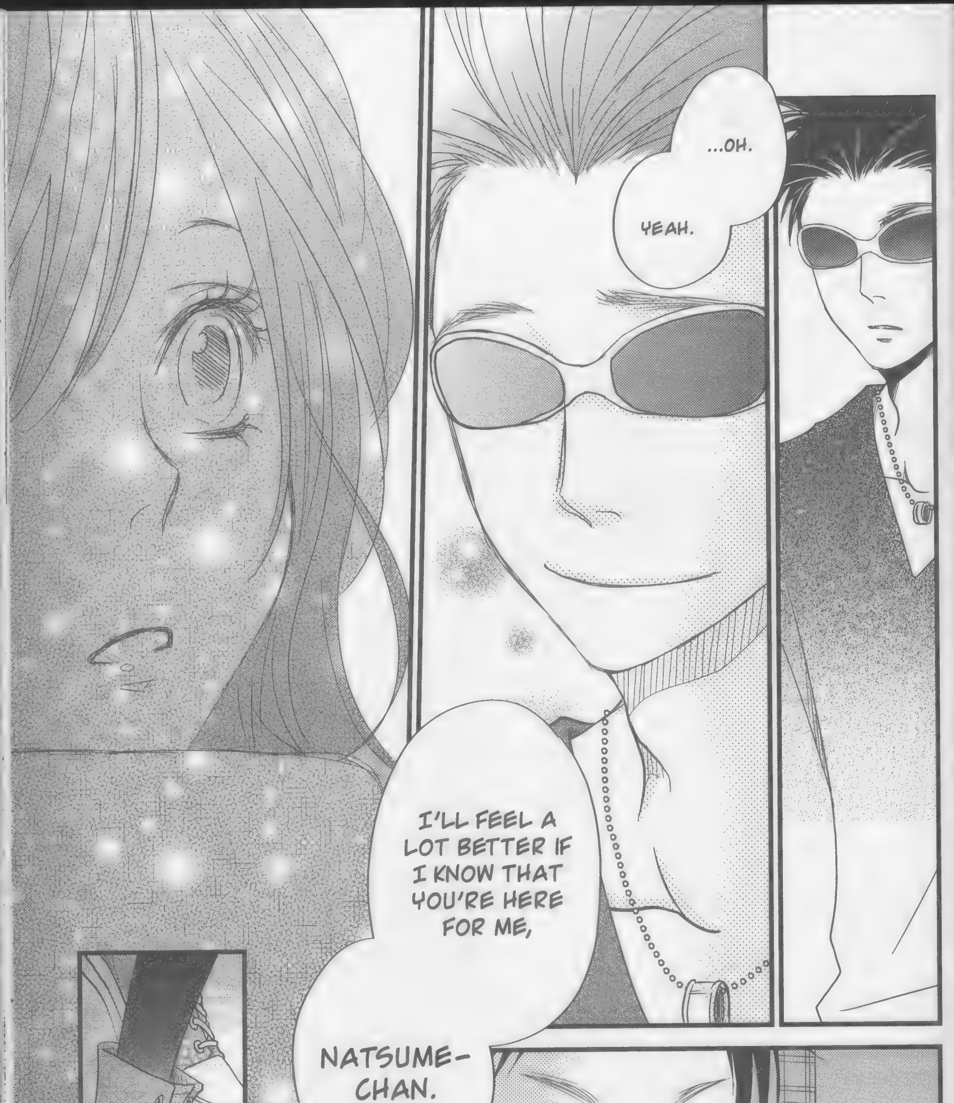

...
...
SHE OVERWHELMED ME.
IT'S LIKE
"I LOVE HIM."
...
RATTLE
HEY, SHIZUKU.
I THINK I JUST SAW NATSUME RUNNING OFF DOING BACKFLIPS.
I WAS GETTING CHOKED UP,
JUST WATCHING HER.
SHE SURE IS WEIRD, HA HA HA.
I'M GONNA BUY SOMETHING TO DRINK. WANT ANYTHING?
...
KIMCHI BREAD.
BUT SOMETHING'S OFF.

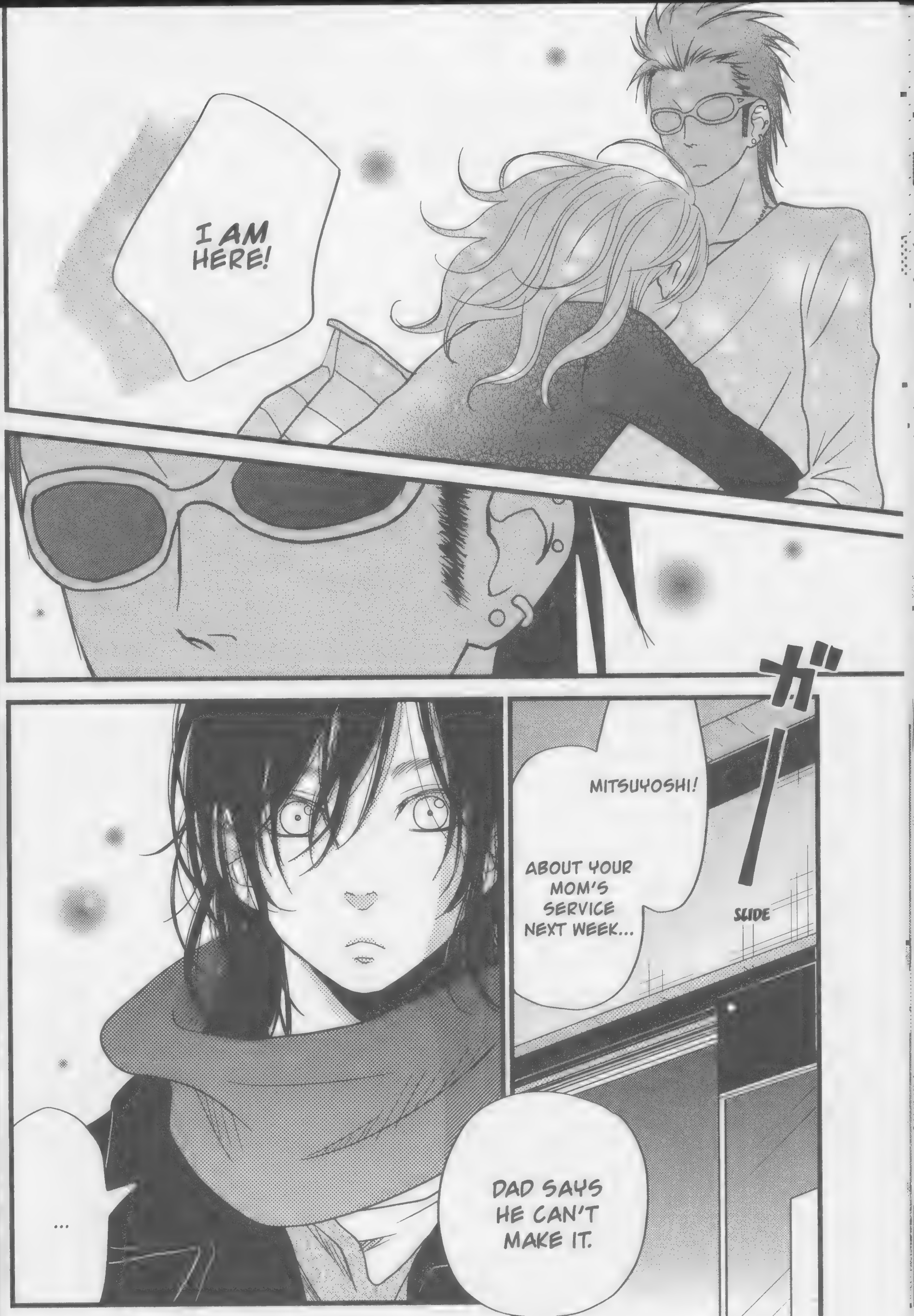

Misawa Batting Center
Batting Game
GAME
HEY, GOOD TO SEE YOU, SASAYAN-KUN.
GAAAH
HOME RUN
WHOOSH
'SUP.
OH HEY, MITCHAN. I FINALLY DID IT!
USED MY NEW YEAR'S MONEY.
I BOUGHT MY OWN FISHING ROD!
OH, THAT'S GREAT!
SO YOU WANNA GO AGAIN?
WE'LL INVITE THE GANG.
...

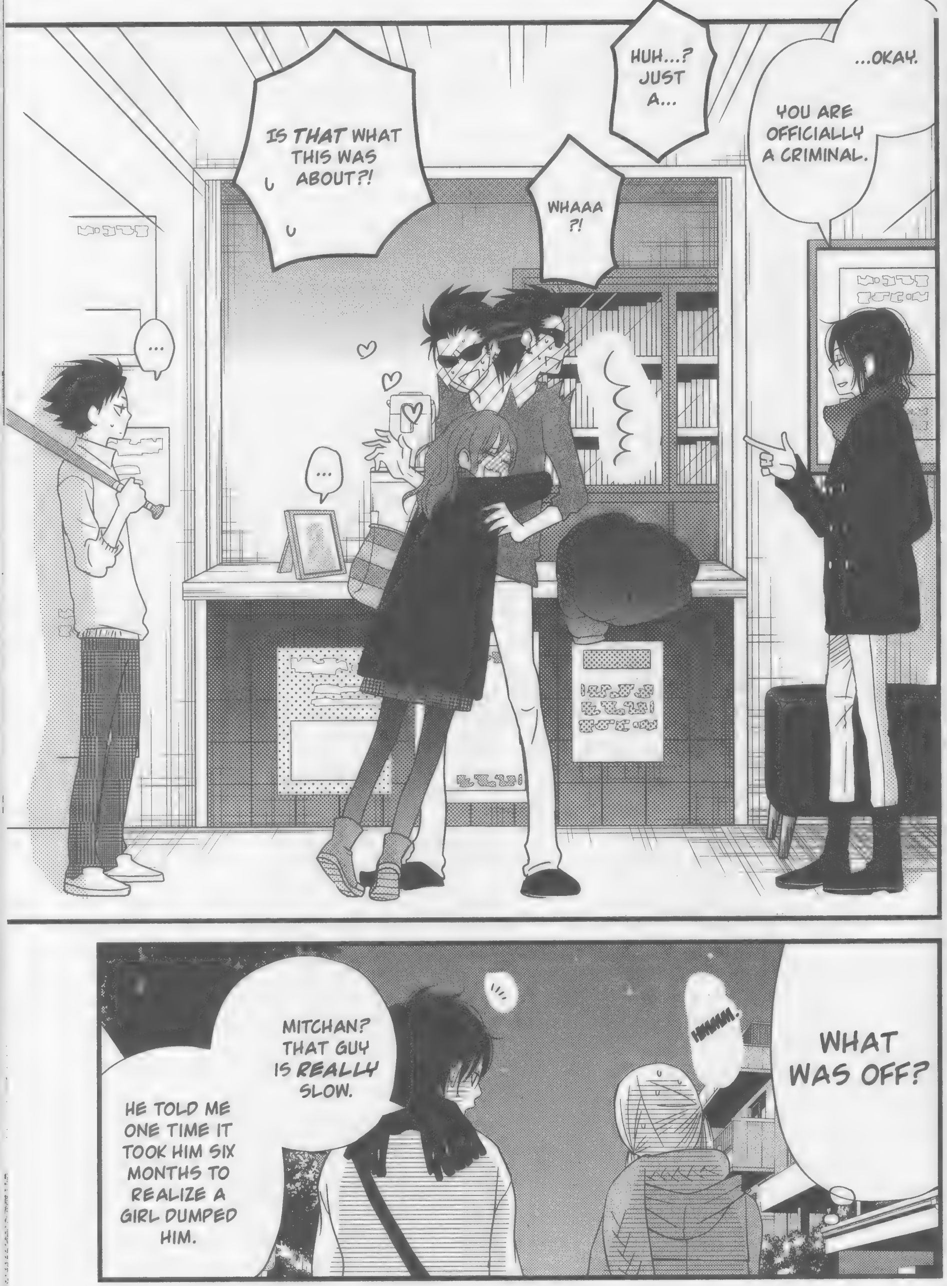

AH, WELL COME ON IN.
OH, IS YOUR NECK ALL BETTER? YOU TWISTED IT, RIGHT?
YES ♡ IT'S BEEN HEALED WITH THE POWER OF LOVE♡
ARRRGH.
I DO NOT GET IT.
HUH?
WHO'S THAT IN THIS PICTURE?
WHAT-EVER. I DON'T CARE.
OH, THAT?
HOME RUN KING
THAT'S MY MOM.
NEXT WEEK, IT WILL BE ONE YEAR SINCE SHE DIED.
WE DIDN'T HAVE A GOOD PICTURE OF HER FOR THE FUNERAL.
BUT I FOUND ONE WHEN I WAS ORGANIZING MY ALBUMS.
AND I FIGURED, SINCE I HAVE IT, I MIGHT AS WELL PUT IT UP IN THE SHOP..
HM?
...

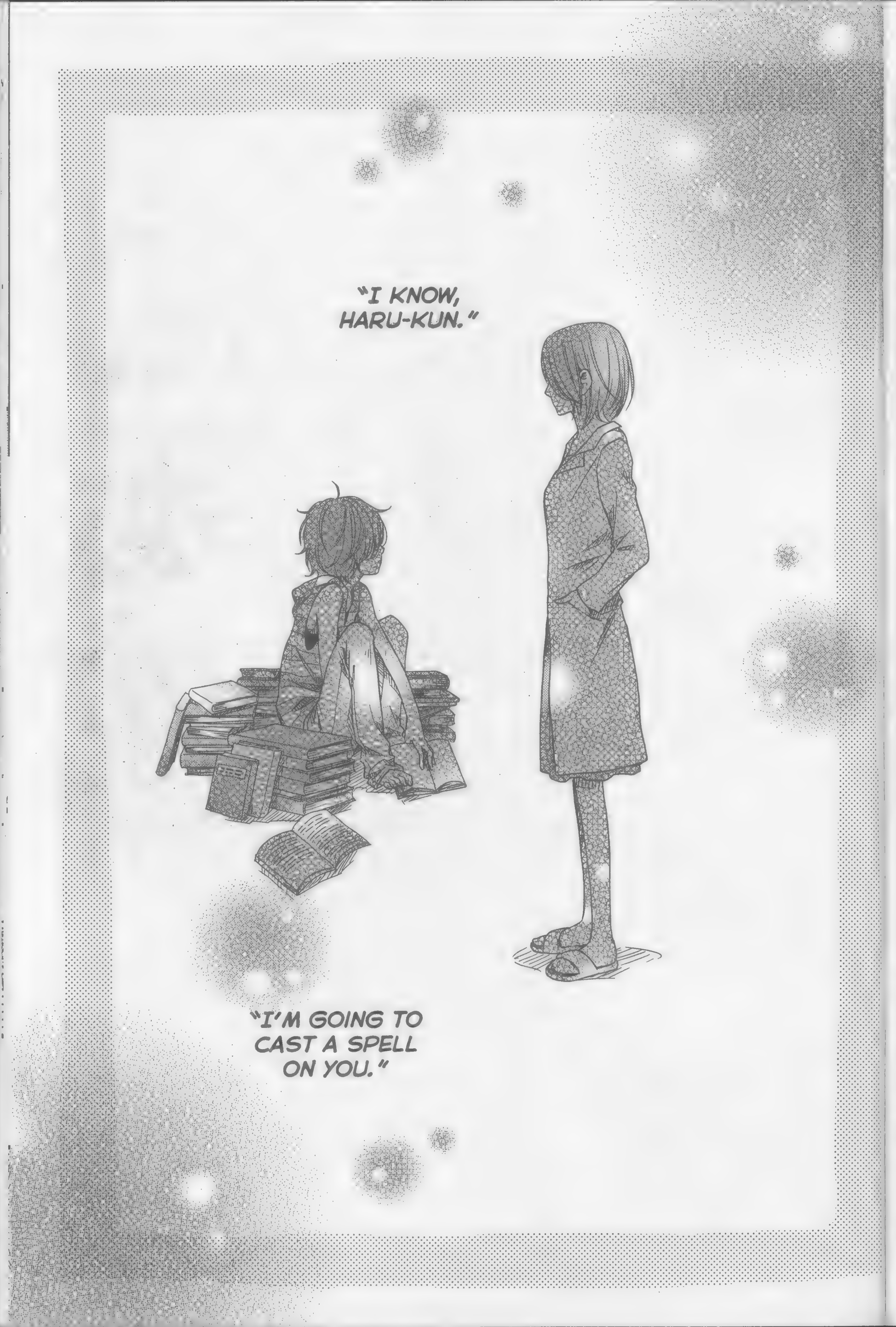

YOU SURE?! I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D WANT NATSUME-SAN THERE.
HM? WHY NOT?
SHE'S A GOOD KID.
...
COME ON, ARE YOU DOING THAT ON PURPOSE?
OR ARE YOU THAT AIRHEADED?
?
DAMN, I CAN'T TELL.
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH NATSUME-CHAN?
I DUNNO.
BUT I DON'T THINK SHE'LL BE COMING AROUND HERE ANYMORE.
OH! NATSUME-CHAN!
I HUH?
UH... HEH HEH ♡
I'M HERE ♡


P-
UH...OH.
SORRY. DID THAT UPSET YOU?
PLEASE FEEL BETTER.
NO MATTER WHAT.
I
WILL PROTECT YOU, MITCHAN-SAN.
I'LL NEVER, EVER LEAVE YOU ALONE.

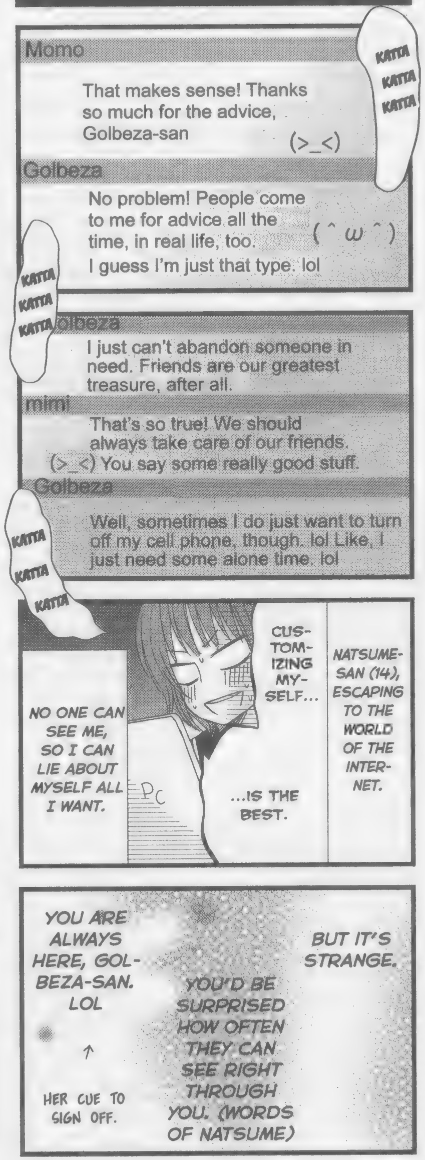

...OH.
YEAH.
I'LL FEEL A LOT BETTER IF I KNOW THAT YOU'RE HERE FOR ME,
NATSUME-CHAN.
HUH...?
I...


I AM HERE!
ガ
SLIDE
MITSUYOSHI!
ABOUT YOUR MOM'S SERVICE NEXT WEEK...
DAD SAYS HE CAN'T MAKE IT.
...


...OKAY.
YOU ARE OFFICIALLY A CRIMINAL.
HUH...? JUST A...
WHAAA?!
IS *THAT* WHAT THIS WAS ABOUT?!
...
...
WHAT WAS OFF?
HMMM.
MITCHAN? THAT GUY IS *REALLY* SLOW.
HE TOLD ME ONE TIME IT TOOK HIM SIX MONTHS TO REALIZE A GIRL DUMPED HIM.


"I KNOW, HARU-KUN."
"I'M GOING TO CAST A SPELL ON YOU."

My Net Persona



Momo

That makes sense! Thanks so much for the advice, Golbeza-san (>_<)

Golbeza

No problem! People come to me for advice all the time, in real life, too. (＾ω＾)
I guess I'm just that type. lol

Golbeza

I just can't abandon someone in need. Friends are our greatest treasure, after all.

mimi

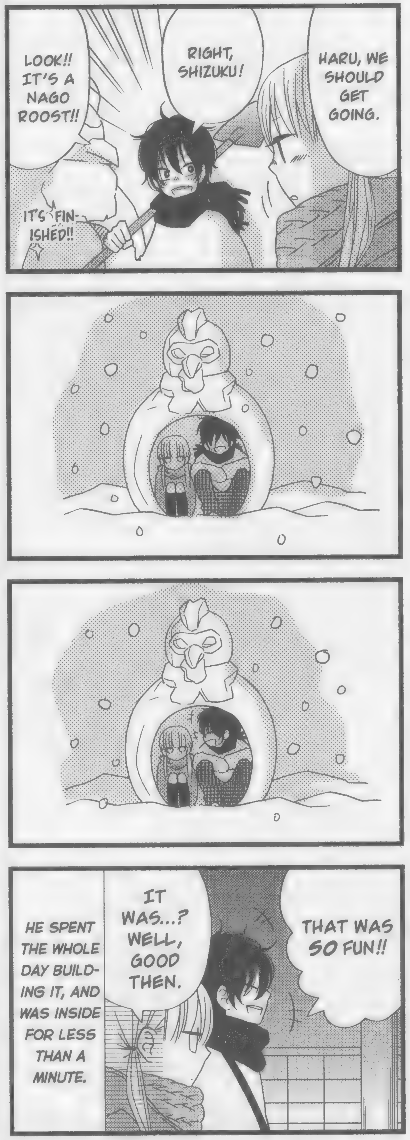
That's so true! We should always take care of our friends. (>_<) You say some really good stuff.

Golbeza

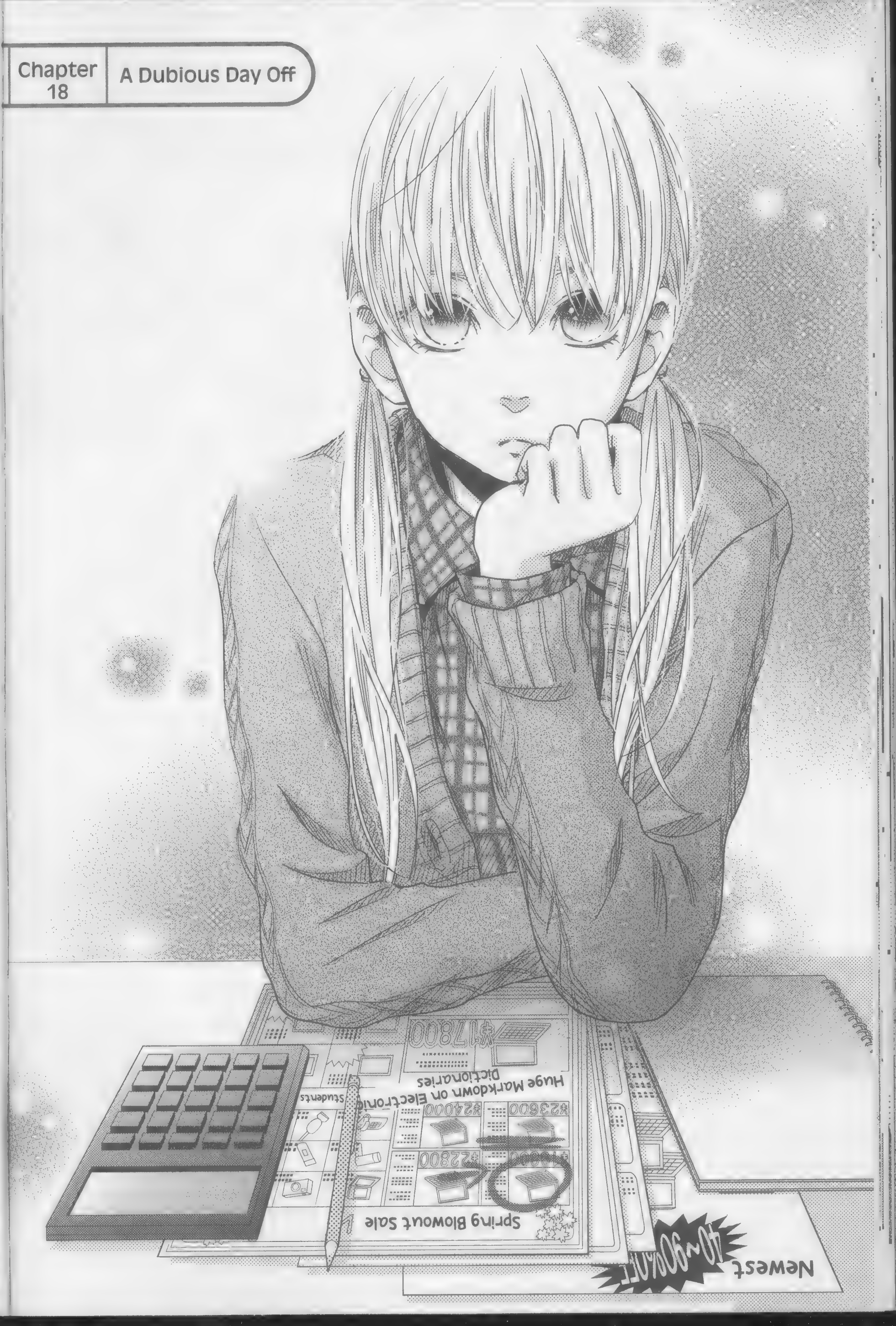
Well, sometimes I do just want to turn off my cell phone, though. lol Like, I just need some alone time. lol

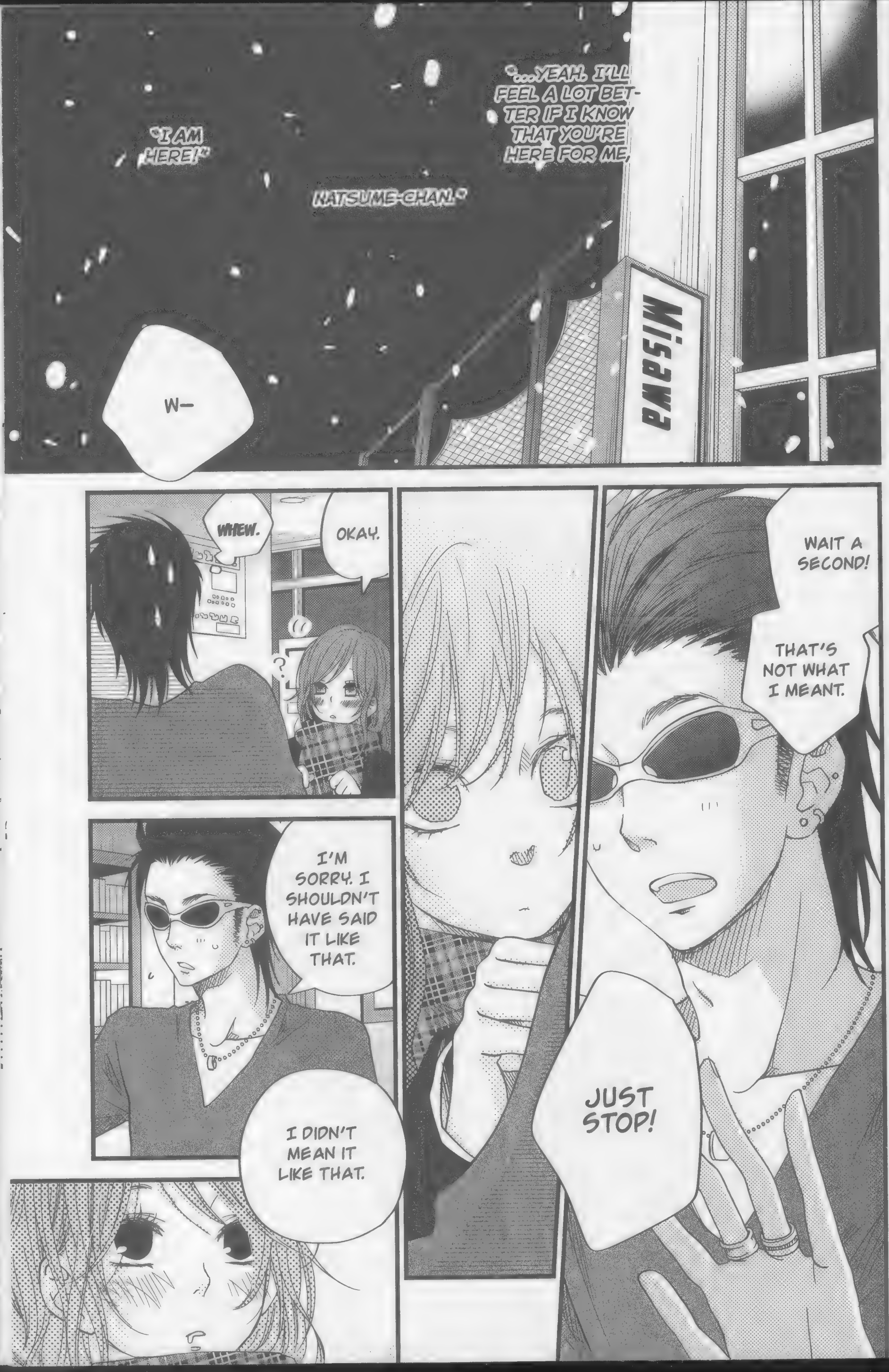
KATTA KATTA KATTA
KATTA KATTA KATTA
KATTA KATTA KATTA
NATSUME-SAN (14), ESCAPING TO THE WORLD OF THE INTERNET.
CUSTOMIZING MYSELF...
...IS THE BEST.
NO ONE CAN SEE ME, SO I CAN LIE ABOUT MYSELF ALL I WANT.
PC
BUT IT'S STRANGE.
YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW OFTEN THEY CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOU. (WORDS OF NATSUME)
YOU ARE ALWAYS HERE, GOLBEZA-SAN. LOL
↑
HER CUE TO SIGN OFF.

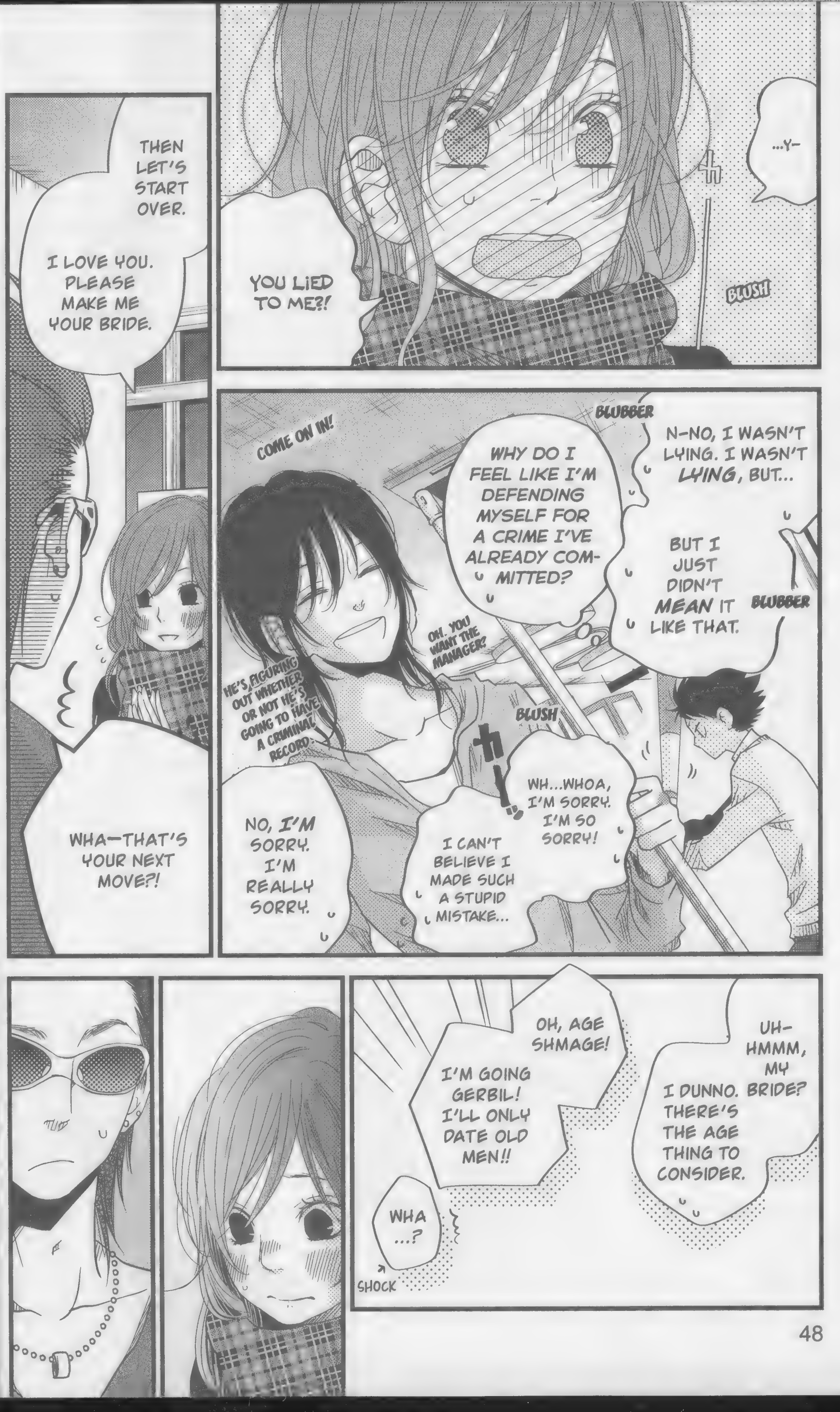
Snow

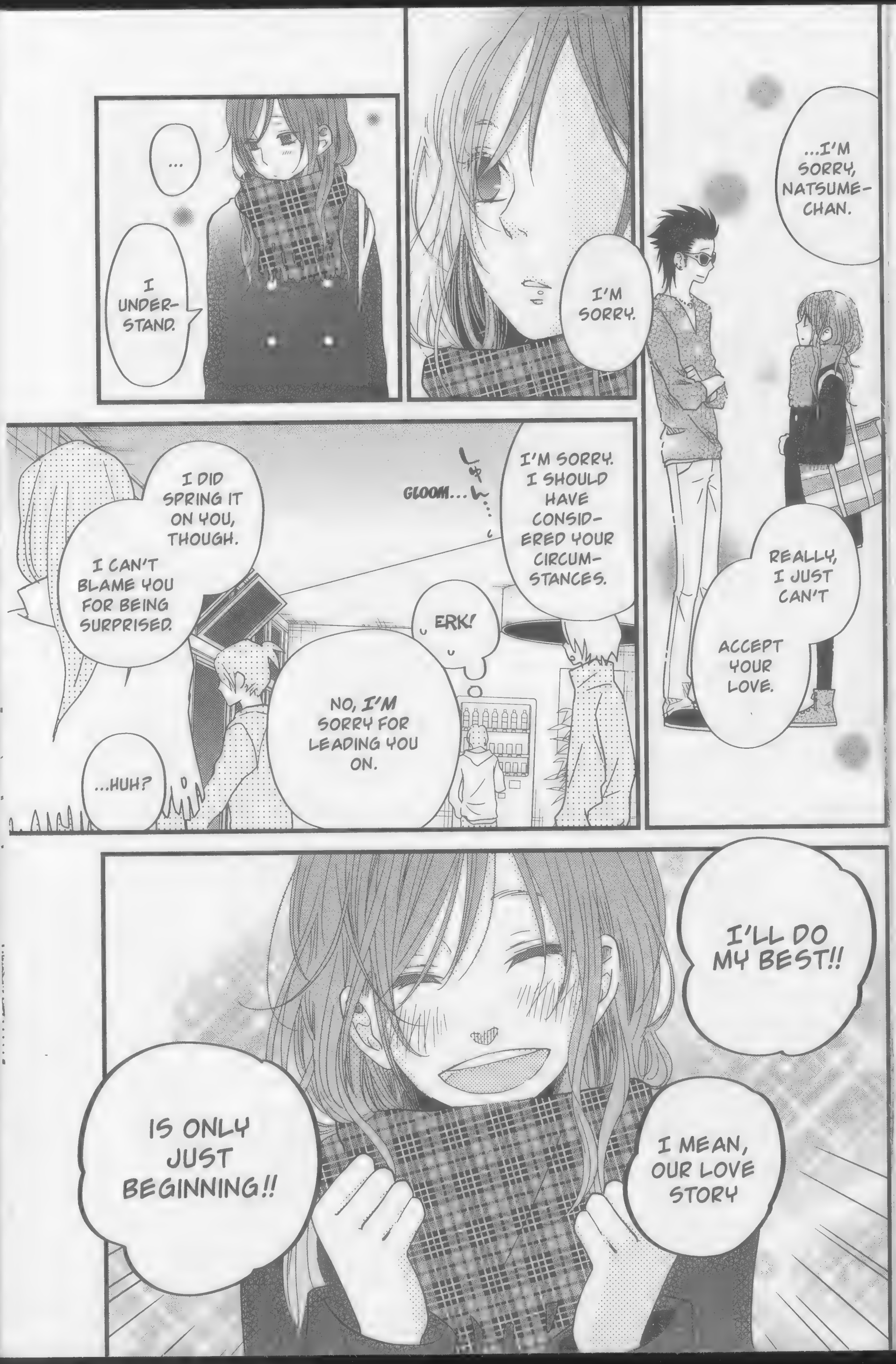

HARU, WE SHOULD GET GOING.
RIGHT, SHIZUKU!
LOOK!! IT'S A NAGO ROOST!!
IT'S FINISHED!!
THAT WAS SO FUN!!
IT WAS...? WELL, GOOD THEN.
HE SPENT THE WHOLE DAY BUILDING IT, AND WAS INSIDE FOR LESS THAN A MINUTE.

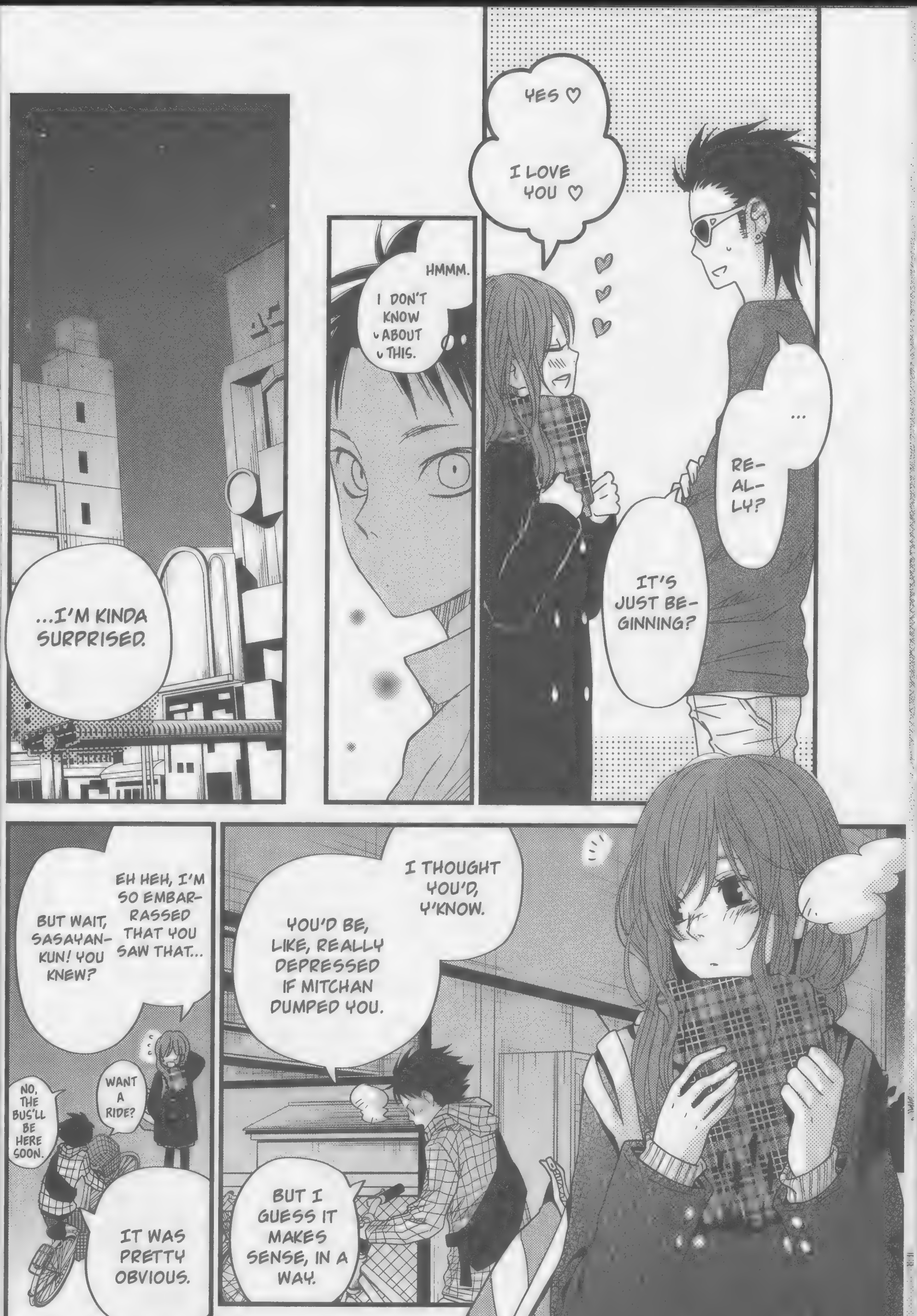
Chapter 18 A Dubious Day Off

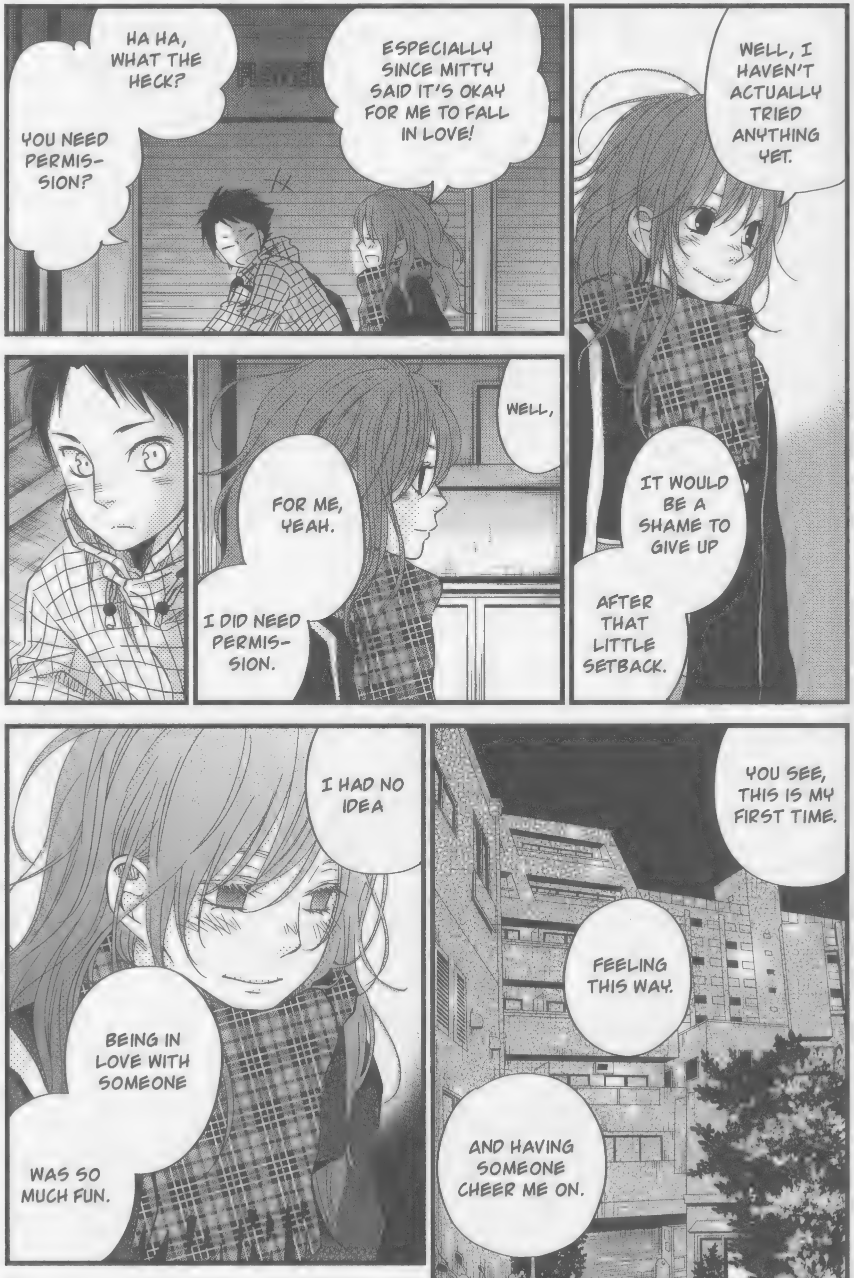

Newest
40~90% OFF
Spring Blowout Sale
Huge Markdown on Electronic Dictionaries
Students
¥17800
¥23600
¥24000
¥22800

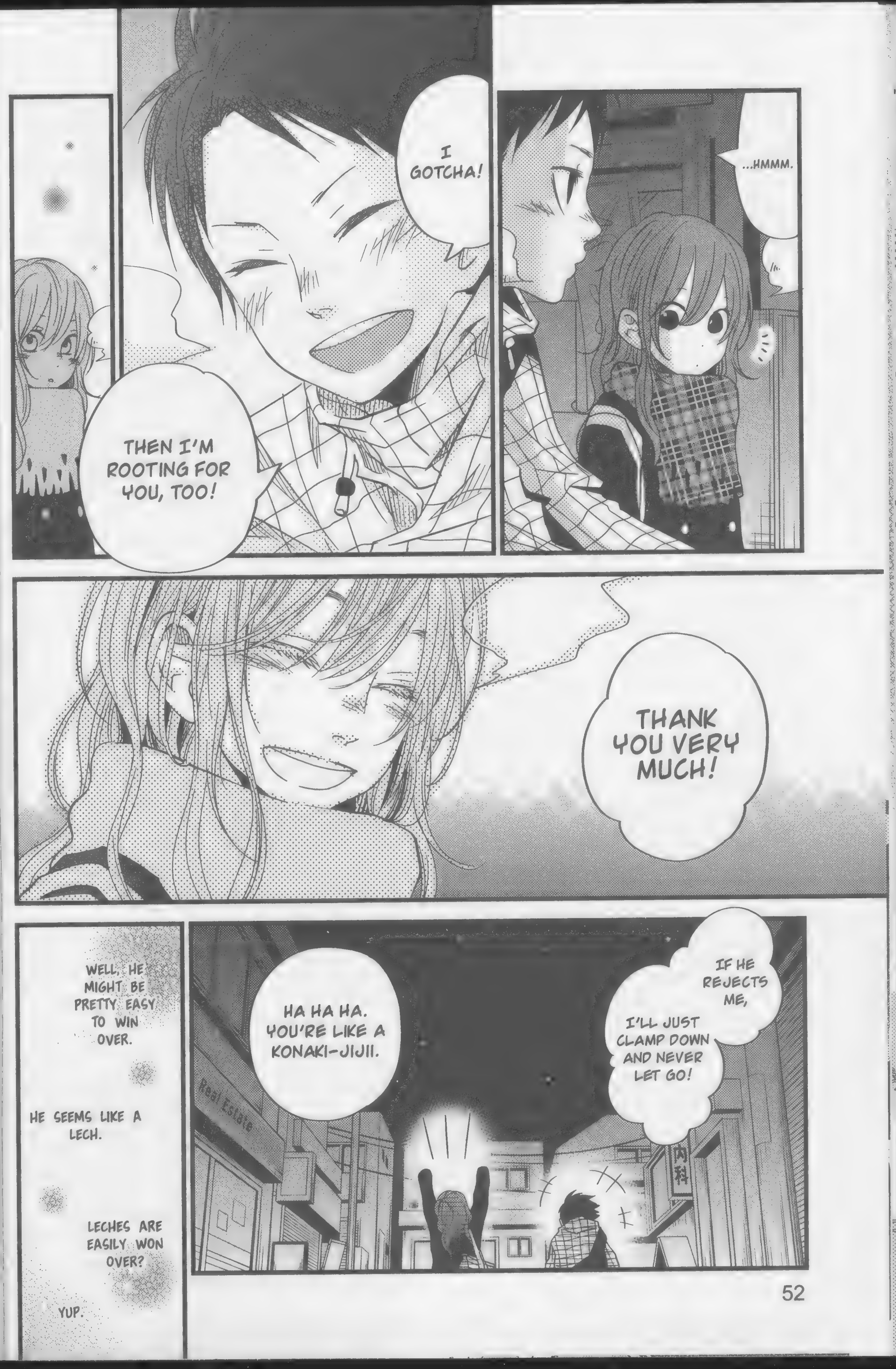

"...YEAH. I'LL FEEL A LOT BETTER IF I KNOW THAT YOU'RE HERE FOR ME,
"I AM HERE!"
NATSUME-CHAN."
Misawa
W–
WAIT A SECOND!
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
JUST STOP!
OKAY.
WHEW.
I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID IT LIKE THAT.
I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT.

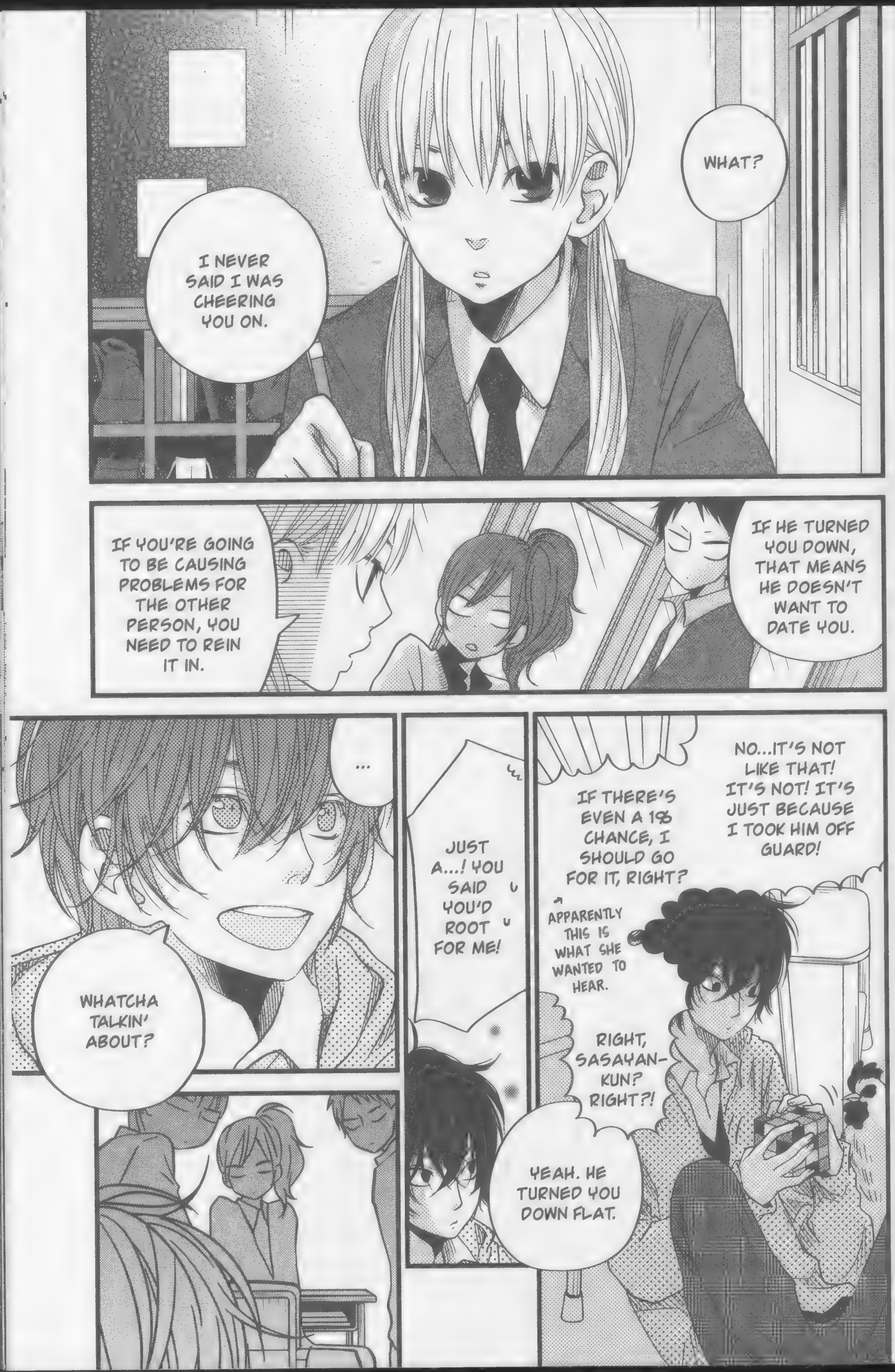

...Y-
BLUSH
YOU LIED TO ME?!
N-NO, I WASN'T LYING. I WASN'T *LYING*, BUT...
BUT I JUST DIDN'T *MEAN* IT LIKE THAT.
BLUBBER
BLUBBER
WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I'M DEFENDING MYSELF FOR A CRIME I'VE ALREADY COMMITTED?
COME ON IN!
OH. YOU WANT THE MANAGER?
HE'S FIGURING OUT WHETHER OR NOT HE'S GOING TO HAVE A CRIMINAL RECORD.
BLUSH
WH...WHOA, I'M SORRY. I'M SO SORRY!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE SUCH A STUPID MISTAKE...
NO, *I'M* SORRY. I'M REALLY SORRY.
THEN LET'S START OVER.
I LOVE YOU. PLEASE MAKE ME YOUR BRIDE.
WHA—THAT'S YOUR NEXT MOVE?!
UH-HMMM, MY BRIDE?
I DUNNO. THERE'S THE AGE THING TO CONSIDER.
OH, AGE SHMAGE!
I'M GOING GERBIL! I'LL ONLY DATE OLD MEN!!
WHA ...?
SHOCK

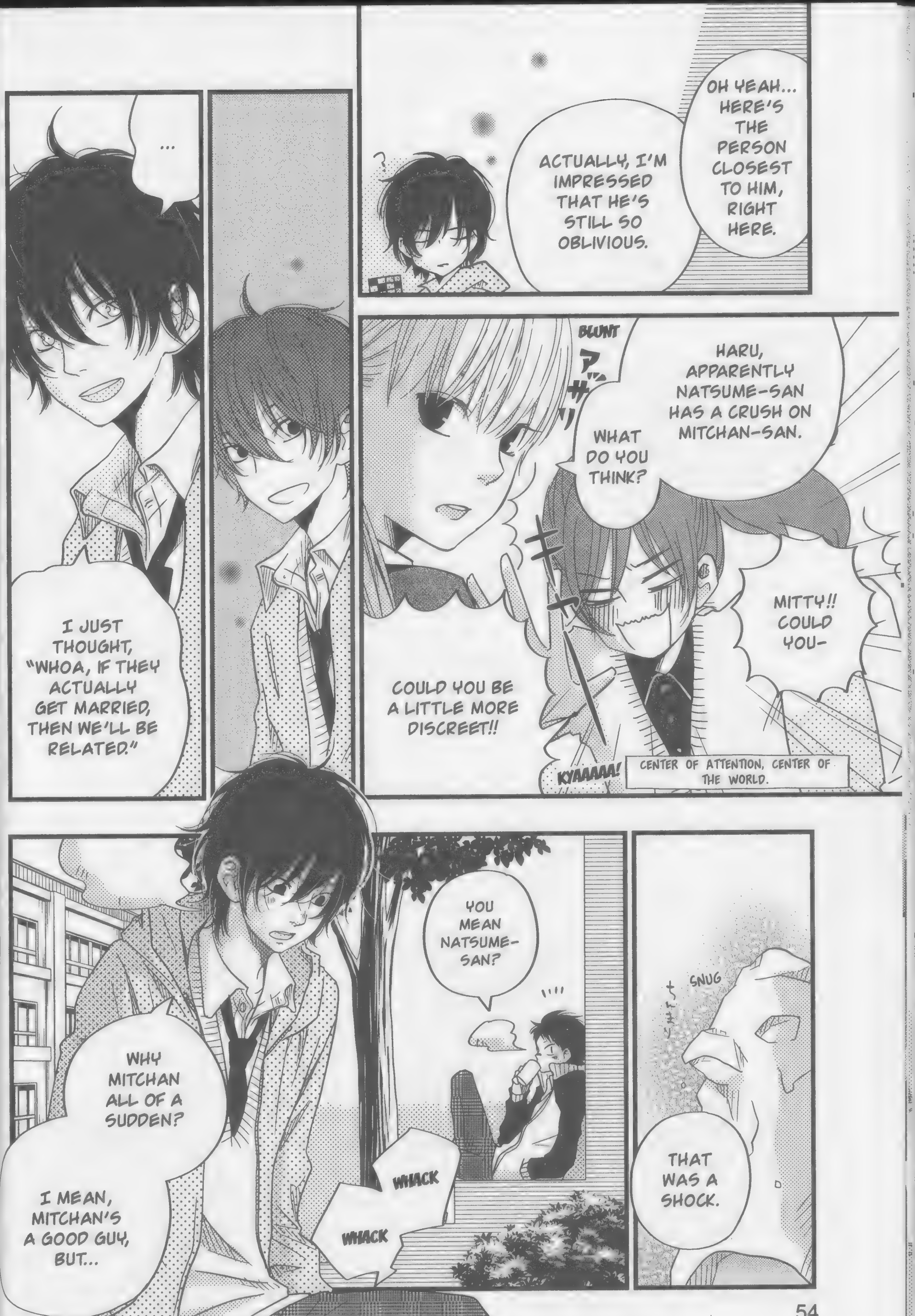

...I'M SORRY, NATSUME-CHAN.
REALLY, I JUST CAN'T
ACCEPT YOUR LOVE.
I'M SORRY.
...
I UNDERSTAND.
GLOOM...
I'M SORRY. I SHOULD HAVE CONSIDERED YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.
ERK!
NO, *I'M* SORRY FOR LEADING YOU ON.
I DID SPRING IT ON YOU, THOUGH.
I CAN'T BLAME YOU FOR BEING SURPRISED.
...HUH?
I'LL DO MY BEST!!
I MEAN, OUR LOVE STORY
IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING!!

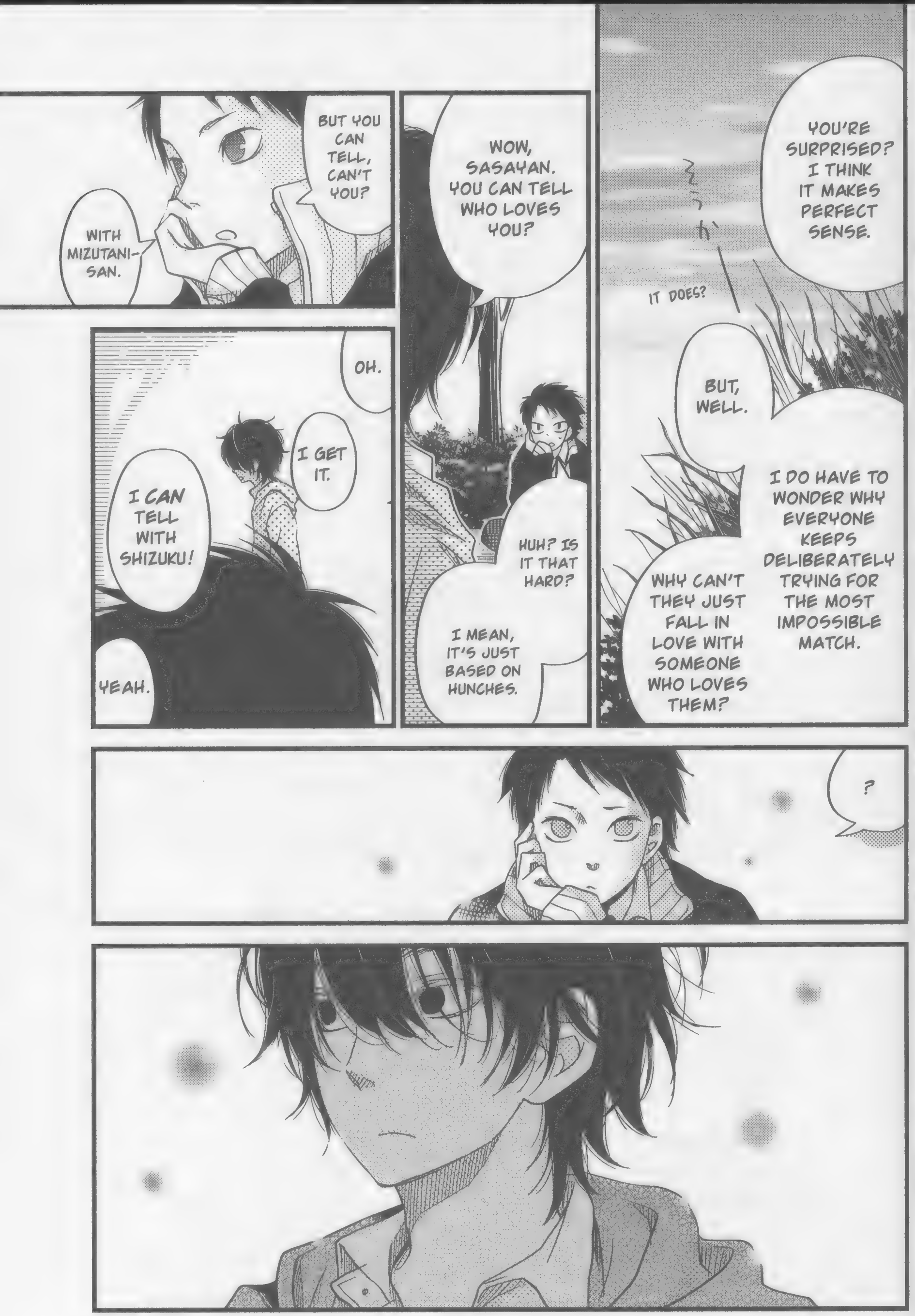

YES ♡
I LOVE YOU ♡
...
REALLY?
IT'S JUST BEGINNING?
HMMM.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS.
...I'M KINDA SURPRISED.
I THOUGHT YOU'D, Y'KNOW.
YOU'D BE, LIKE, REALLY DEPRESSED IF MITCHAN DUMPED YOU.
BUT I GUESS IT MAKES SENSE, IN A WAY.
EH HEH, I'M SO EMBARRASSED THAT YOU SAW THAT...
BUT WAIT, SASAYAN-KUN! YOU KNEW?
WANT A RIDE?
NO, THE BUS'LL BE HERE SOON.
IT WAS PRETTY OBVIOUS.

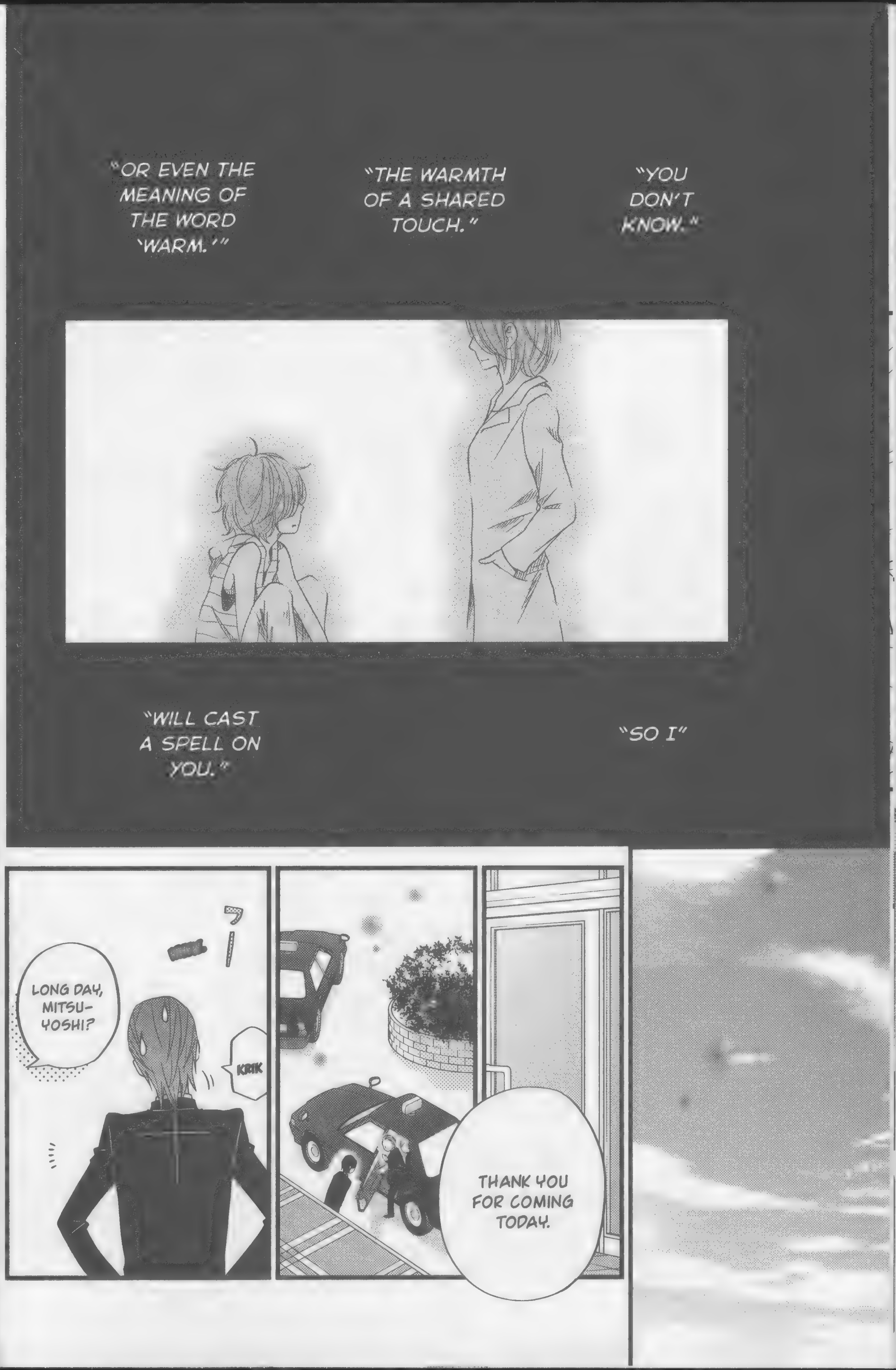

WELL, I HAVEN'T ACTUALLY TRIED ANYTHING YET.
IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO GIVE UP
AFTER THAT LITTLE SETBACK.
ESPECIALLY SINCE MITTY SAID IT'S OKAY FOR ME TO FALL IN LOVE!
HA HA, WHAT THE HECK?
YOU NEED PERMISSION?
WELL,
FOR ME, YEAH.
I DID NEED PERMISSION.
YOU SEE, THIS IS MY FIRST TIME.
FEELING THIS WAY.
AND HAVING SOMEONE CHEER ME ON.
I HAD NO IDEA
BEING IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE
WAS SO MUCH FUN.

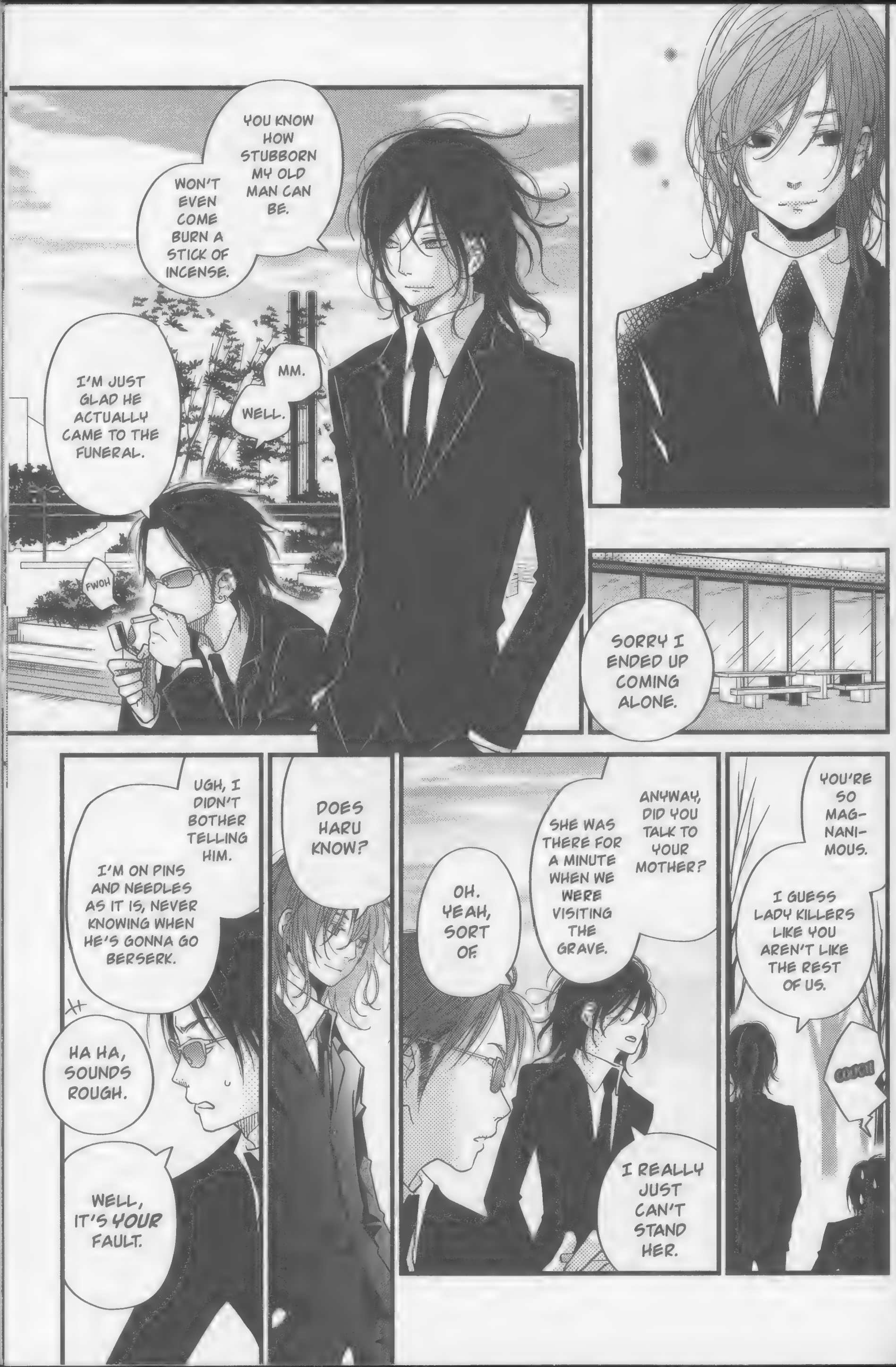

...HMMM.
I GOTCHA!
THEN I'M ROOTING FOR YOU, TOO!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
IF HE REJECTS ME, I'LL JUST CLAMP DOWN AND NEVER LET GO!
HA HA HA. YOU'RE LIKE A KONAKI-JIJII.
Real Estate
内科
WELL, HE MIGHT BE PRETTY EASY TO WIN OVER.
HE SEEMS LIKE A LECH.
LECHES ARE EASILY WON OVER?
YUP.

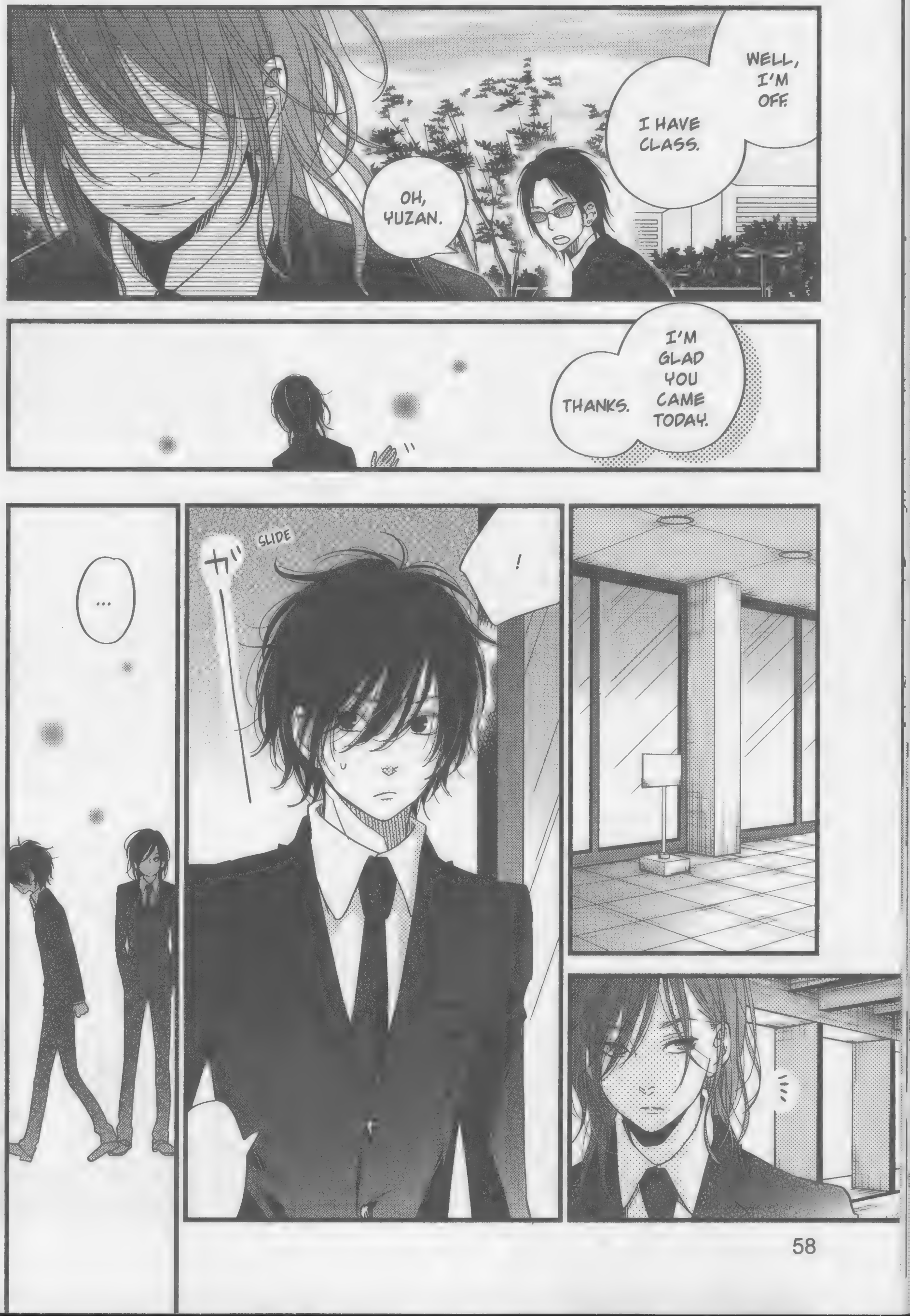

WHAT?
I NEVER SAID I WAS CHEERING YOU ON.
IF HE TURNED YOU DOWN, THAT MEANS HE DOESN'T WANT TO DATE YOU.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE CAUSING PROBLEMS FOR THE OTHER PERSON, YOU NEED TO REIN IT IN.
NO...IT'S NOT LIKE THAT! IT'S NOT! IT'S JUST BECAUSE I TOOK HIM OFF GUARD!
IF THERE'S EVEN A 1% CHANCE, I SHOULD GO FOR IT, RIGHT?
APPARENTLY THIS IS WHAT SHE WANTED TO HEAR.
RIGHT, SASAYAN-KUN? RIGHT?!
YEAH. HE TURNED YOU DOWN FLAT.
JUST A...! YOU SAID YOU'D ROOT FOR ME!
...
WHATCHA TALKIN' ABOUT?

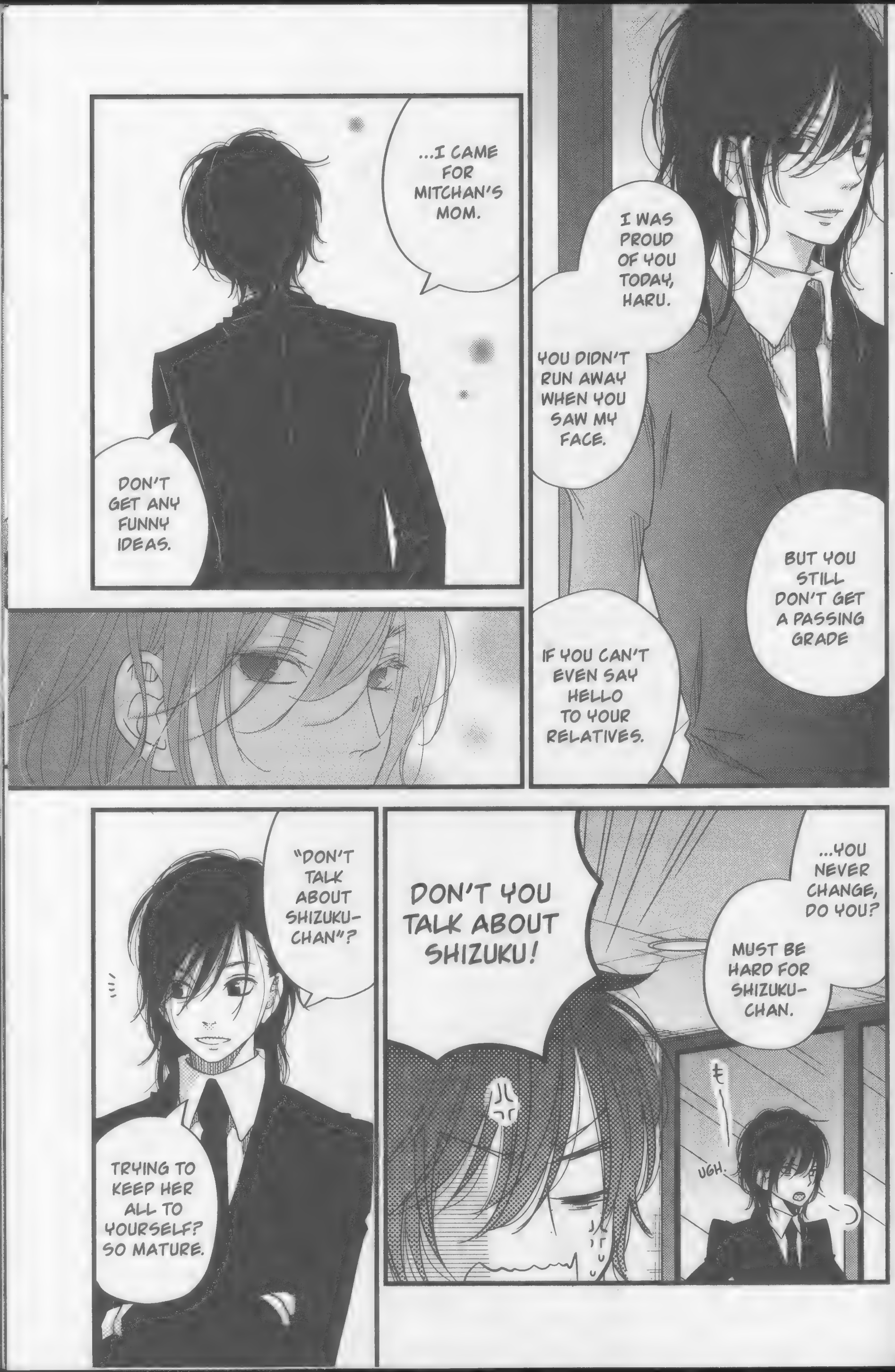

OH YEAH... HERE'S THE PERSON CLOSEST TO HIM, RIGHT HERE.
ACTUALLY, I'M IMPRESSED THAT HE'S STILL SO OBLIVIOUS.
?
HARU, APPARENTLY NATSUME-SAN HAS A CRUSH ON MITCHAN-SAN.
BLUNT
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
MITTY!! COULD YOU-
COULD YOU BE A LITTLE MORE DISCREET!!
KYAAAAA!
CENTER OF ATTENTION, CENTER OF THE WORLD.
...
I JUST THOUGHT, "WHOA, IF THEY ACTUALLY GET MARRIED, THEN WE'LL BE RELATED."
SNUG
THAT WAS A SHOCK.
YOU MEAN NATSUME-SAN?
WHY MITCHAN ALL OF A SUDDEN?
I MEAN, MITCHAN'S A GOOD GUY, BUT...
WHACK
WHACK

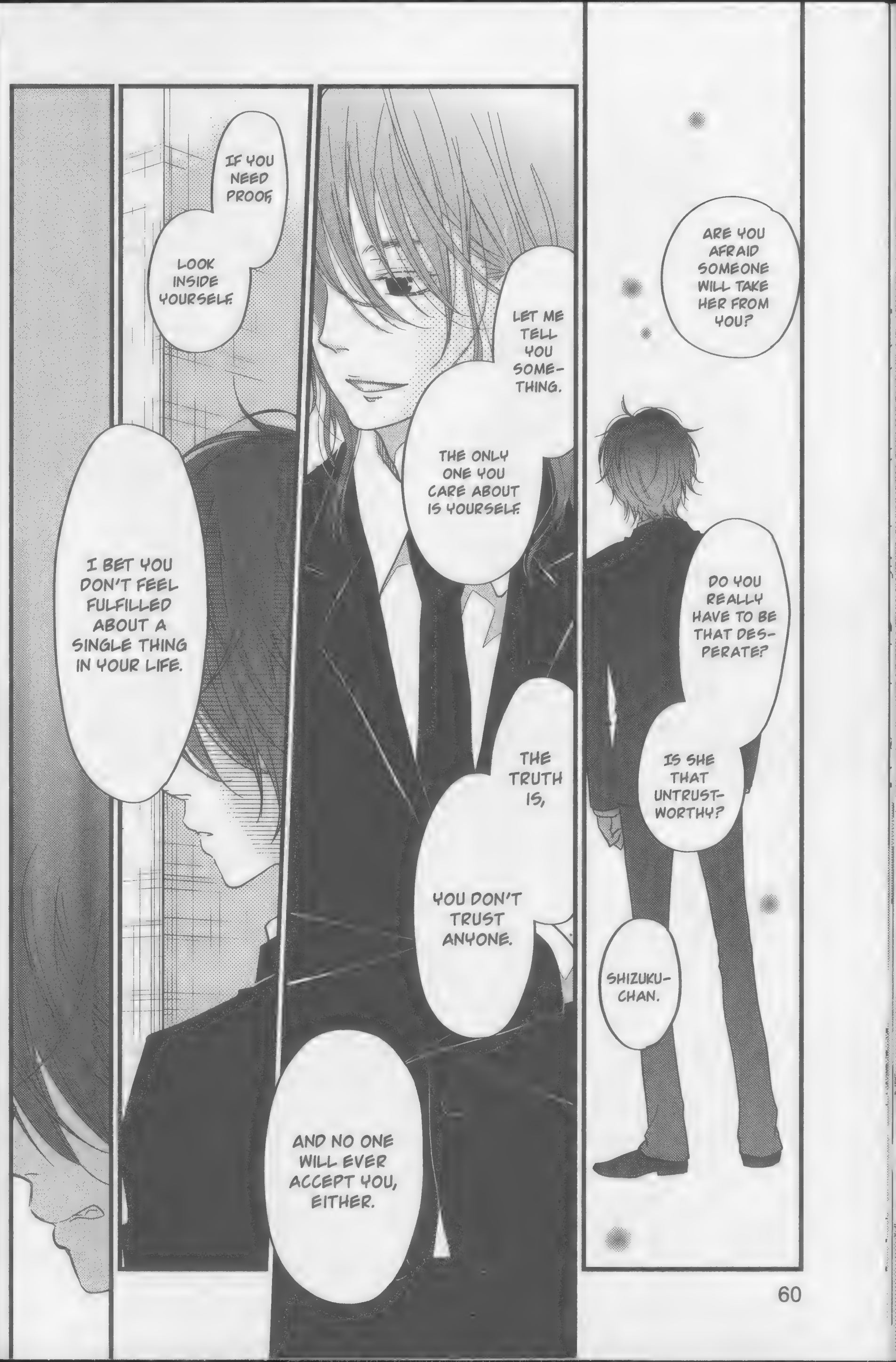

YOU'RE SURPRISED? I THINK IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE.
IT DOES?
BUT, WELL.
I DO HAVE TO WONDER WHY EVERYONE KEEPS DELIBERATELY TRYING FOR THE MOST IMPOSSIBLE MATCH.
WHY CAN'T THEY JUST FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE WHO LOVES THEM?
WOW, SASAYAN. YOU CAN TELL WHO LOVES YOU?
BUT YOU CAN TELL, CAN'T YOU?
WITH MIZUTANI-SAN.
HUH? IS IT THAT HARD?
I MEAN, IT'S JUST BASED ON HUNCHES.
OH.
I GET IT.
I CAN TELL WITH SHIZUKU!
YEAH.
?

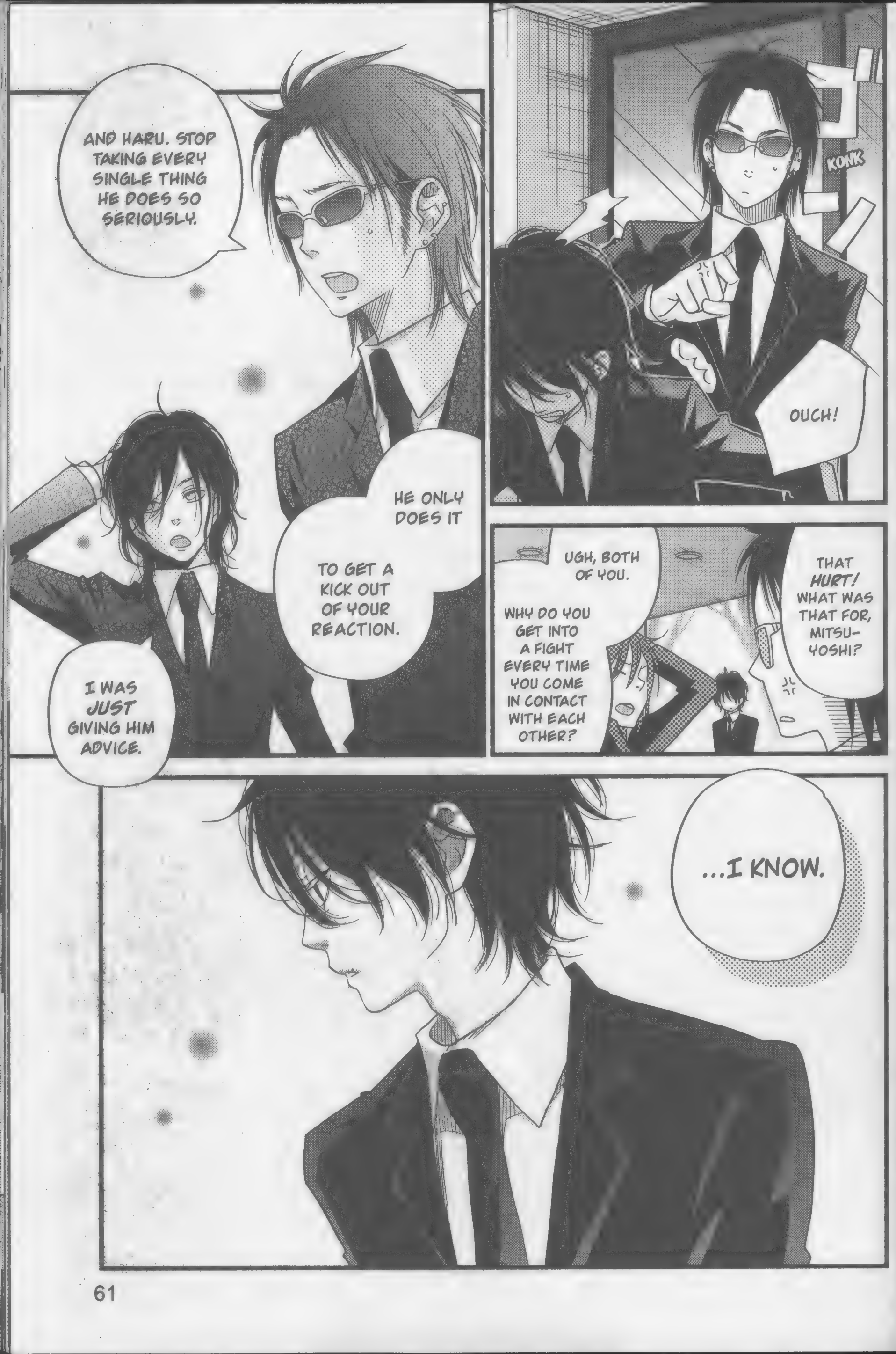

"YOU DON'T KNOW."
"THE WARMTH OF A SHARED TOUCH."
"OR EVEN THE MEANING OF THE WORD 'WARM.'"
"SO I"
"WILL CAST A SPELL ON YOU."
THANK YOU FOR COMING TODAY.
KRIK
LONG DAY, MITSUYOSHI?

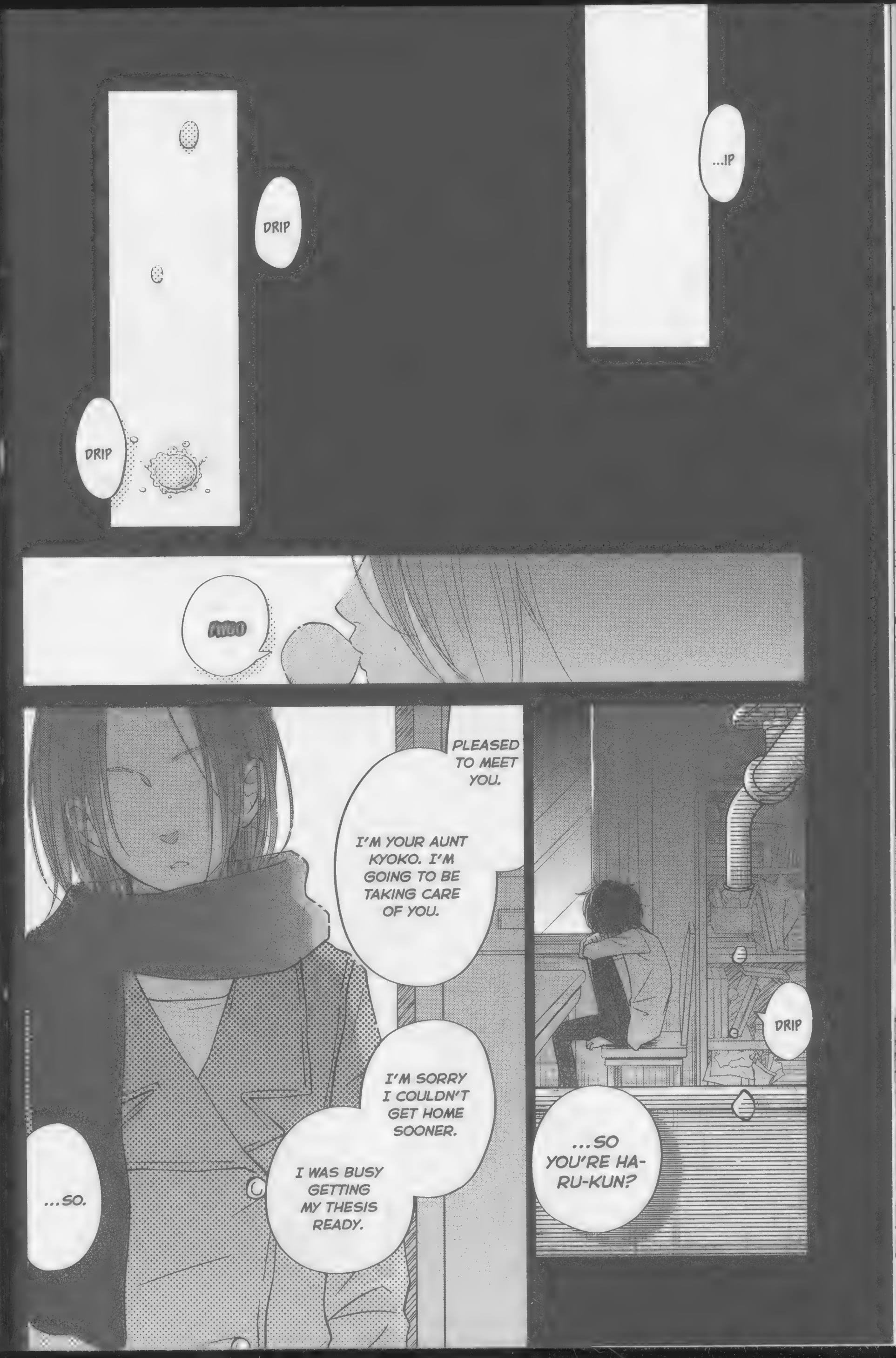

YOU KNOW HOW STUBBORN MY OLD MAN CAN BE.
WON'T EVEN COME BURN A STICK OF INCENSE.
MM.
WELL.
I'M JUST GLAD HE ACTUALLY CAME TO THE FUNERAL.
FWOH
SORRY I ENDED UP COMING ALONE.
YOU'RE SO MAGNANIMOUS.
I GUESS LADY KILLERS LIKE YOU AREN'T LIKE THE REST OF US.
COUGH
ANYWAY, DID YOU TALK TO YOUR MOTHER?
SHE WAS THERE FOR A MINUTE WHEN WE WERE VISITING THE GRAVE.
OH. YEAH, SORT OF.
I REALLY JUST CAN'T STAND HER.
DOES HARU KNOW?
UGH, I DIDN'T BOTHER TELLING HIM.
I'M ON PINS AND NEEDLES AS IT IS, NEVER KNOWING WHEN HE'S GONNA GO BERSERK.
HA HA, SOUNDS ROUGH.
WELL, IT'S YOUR FAULT.

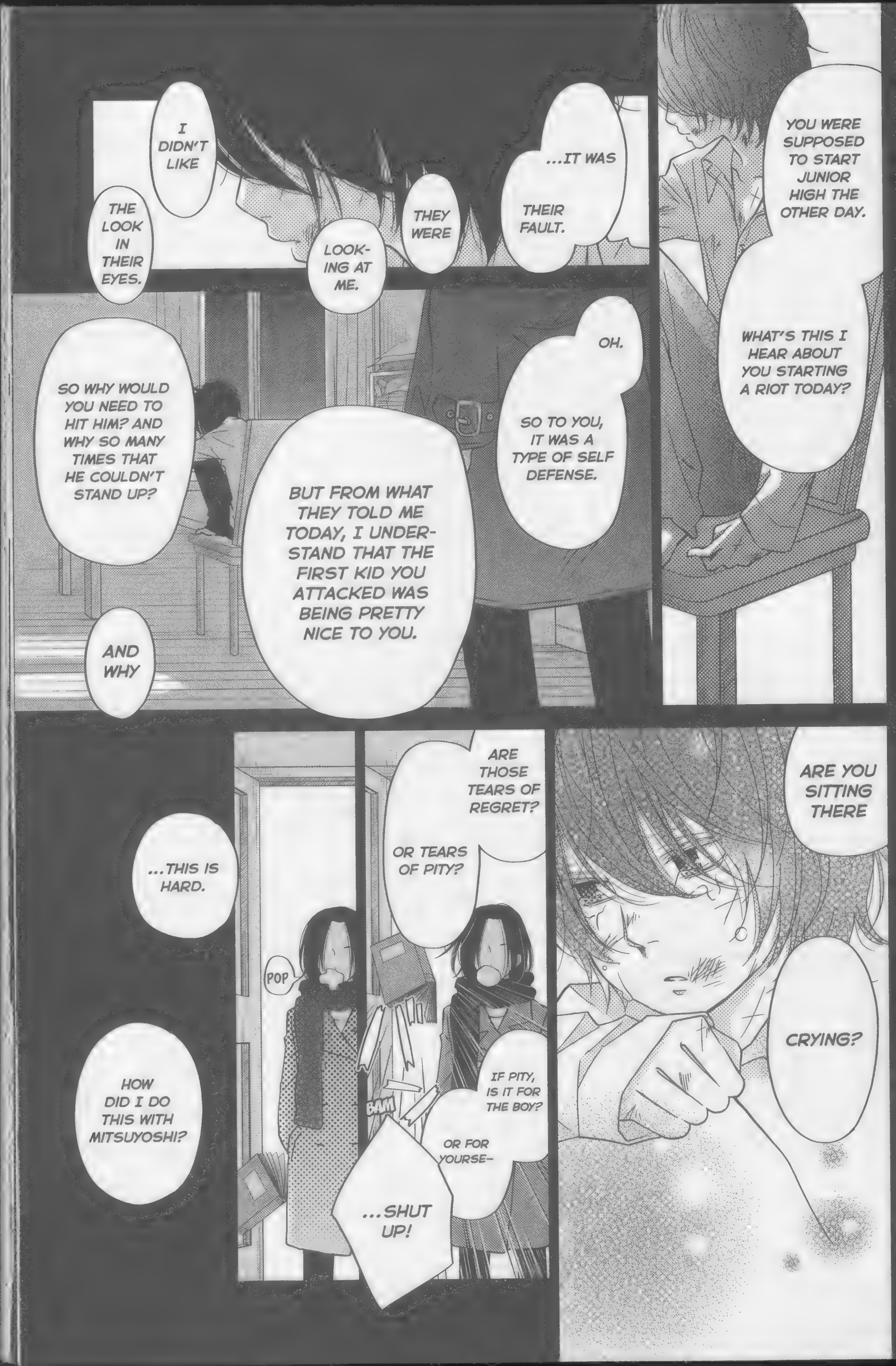

WELL, I'M OFF.
I HAVE CLASS.
OH, YUZAN.
I'M GLAD YOU CAME TODAY.
THANKS.
!
ガ
SLIDE
...

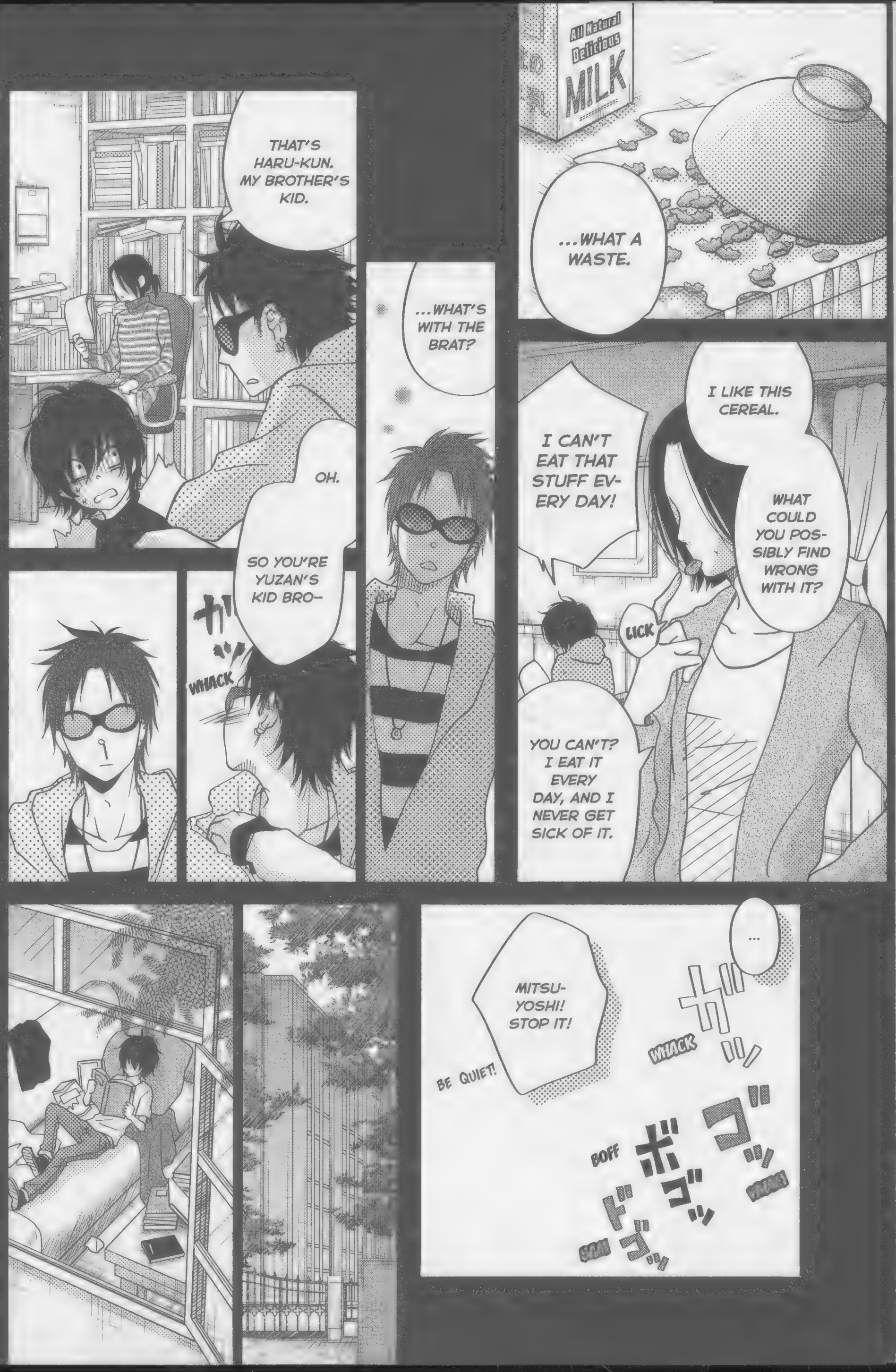

I WAS PROUD OF YOU TODAY, HARU.
YOU DIDN'T RUN AWAY WHEN YOU SAW MY FACE.
...I CAME FOR MITCHAN'S MOM.
DON'T GET ANY FUNNY IDEAS.
BUT YOU STILL DON'T GET A PASSING GRADE
IF YOU CAN'T EVEN SAY HELLO TO YOUR RELATIVES.
...YOU NEVER CHANGE, DO YOU?
MUST BE HARD FOR SHIZUKU-CHAN.
DON'T YOU TALK ABOUT SHIZUKU!
も〜
UGH.
"DON'T TALK ABOUT SHIZUKU-CHAN"?
TRYING TO KEEP HER ALL TO YOURSELF? SO MATURE.

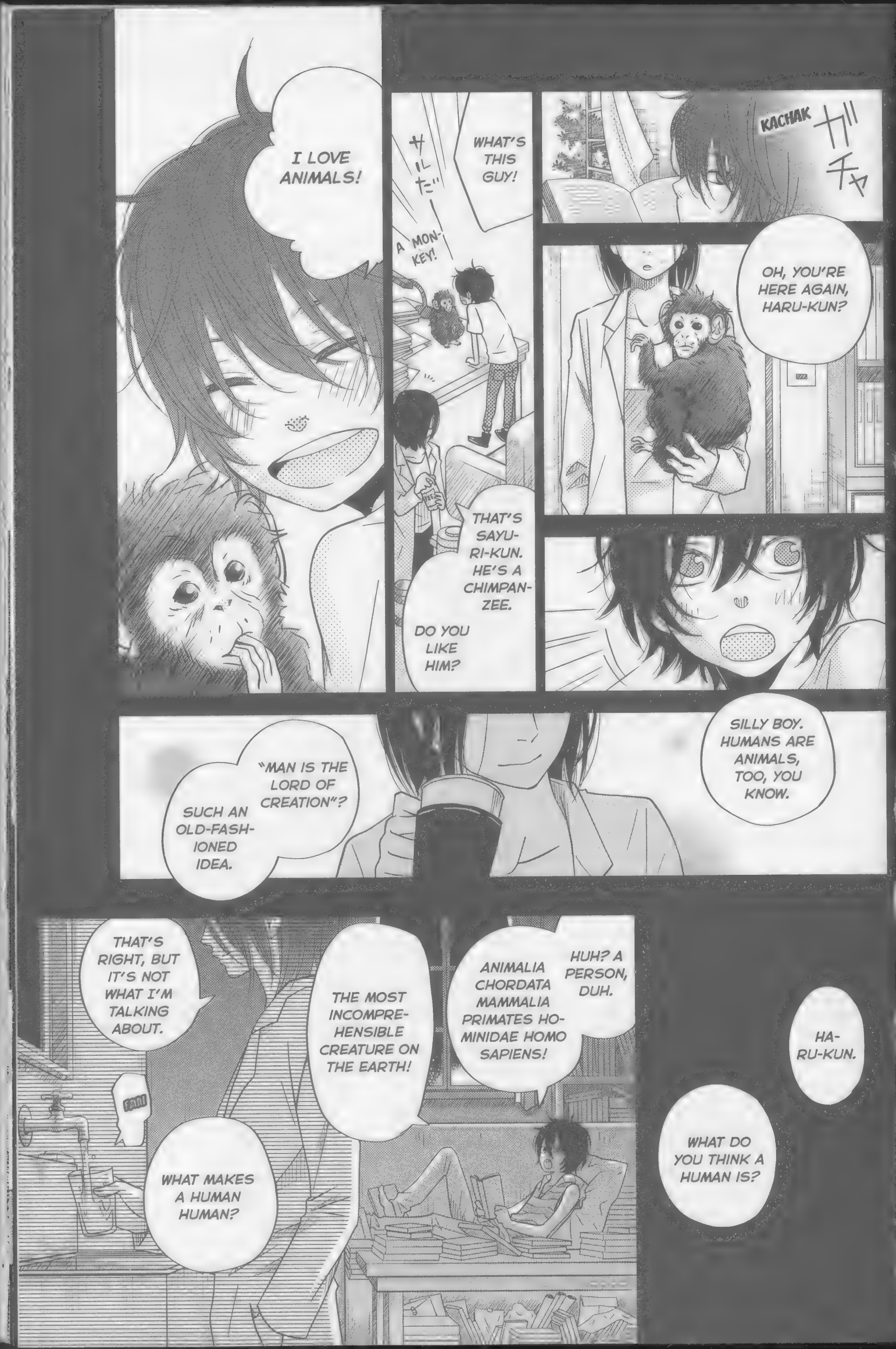

ARE YOU AFRAID SOMEONE WILL TAKE HER FROM YOU?
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO BE THAT DESPERATE?
IS SHE THAT UNTRUSTWORTHY?
SHIZUKU-CHAN.
LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING.
THE ONLY ONE YOU CARE ABOUT IS YOURSELF.
THE TRUTH IS,
YOU DON'T TRUST ANYONE.
AND NO ONE WILL EVER ACCEPT YOU, EITHER.
IF YOU NEED PROOF,
LOOK INSIDE YOURSELF.
I BET YOU DON'T FEEL FULFILLED ABOUT A SINGLE THING IN YOUR LIFE.

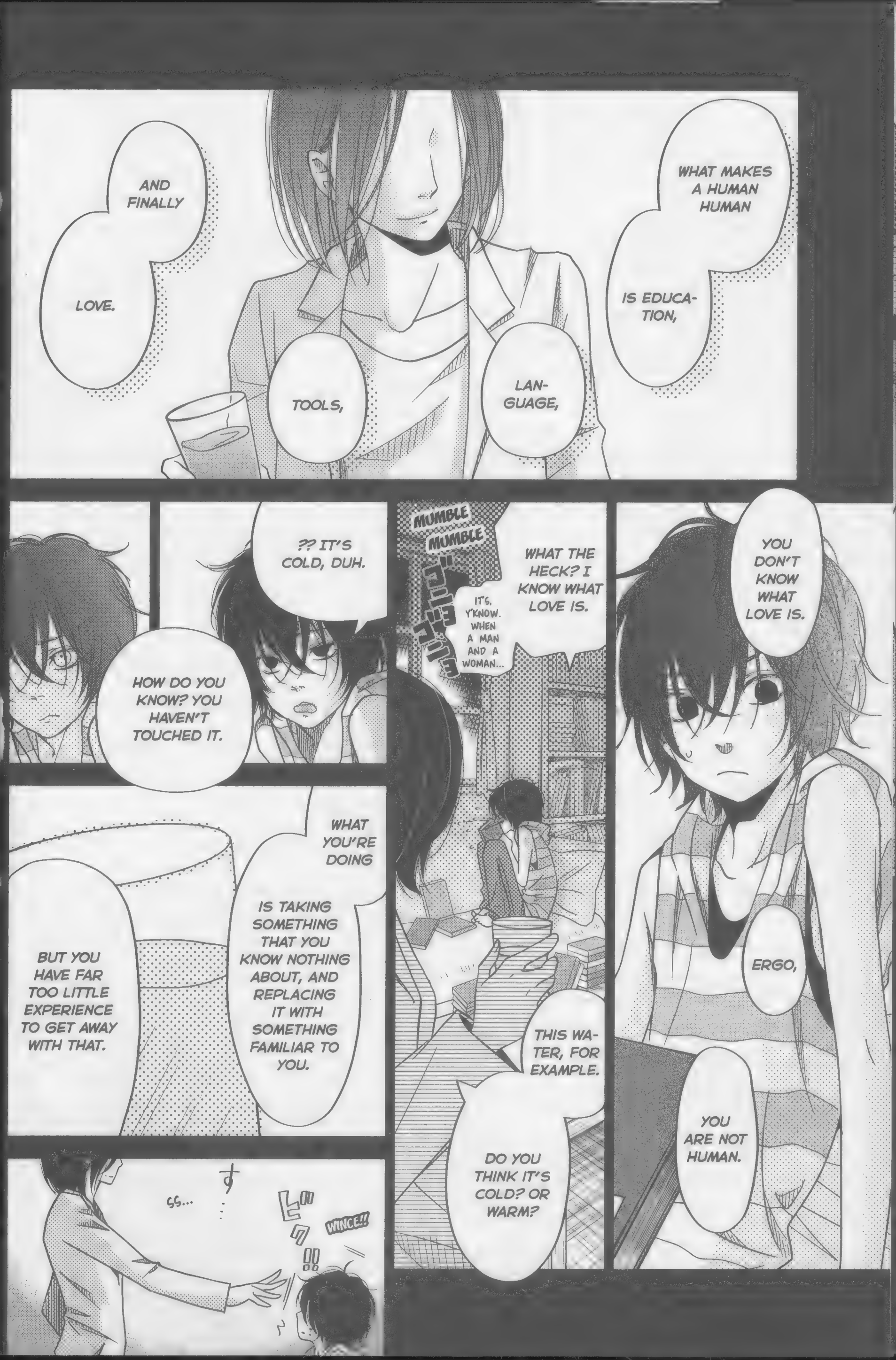

KONK
OUCH!
THAT *HURT!* WHAT WAS THAT FOR, MITSUYOSHI?
UGH, BOTH OF YOU.
WHY DO YOU GET INTO A FIGHT EVERY TIME YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER?
AND HARU. STOP TAKING EVERY SINGLE THING HE DOES SO SERIOUSLY.
HE ONLY DOES IT
TO GET A KICK OUT OF YOUR REACTION.
I WAS *JUST* GIVING HIM ADVICE.
...I KNOW.

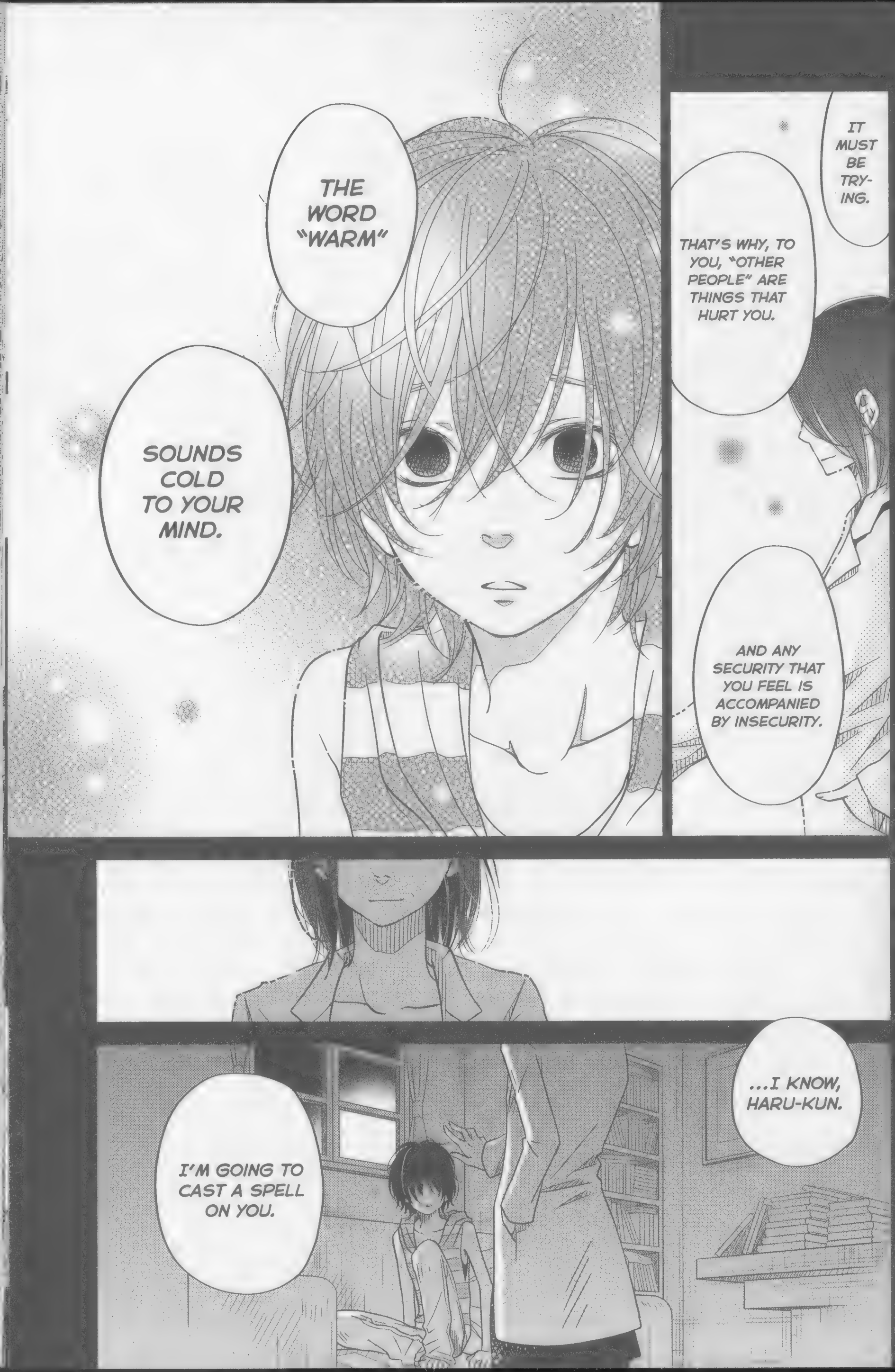

...IP
DRIP
DRIP
FWOO
...SO YOU'RE HA-RU-KUN?
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
I'M YOUR AUNT KYOKO. I'M GOING TO BE TAKING CARE OF YOU.
DRIP
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T GET HOME SOONER.
I WAS BUSY GETTING MY THESIS READY.
...SO.

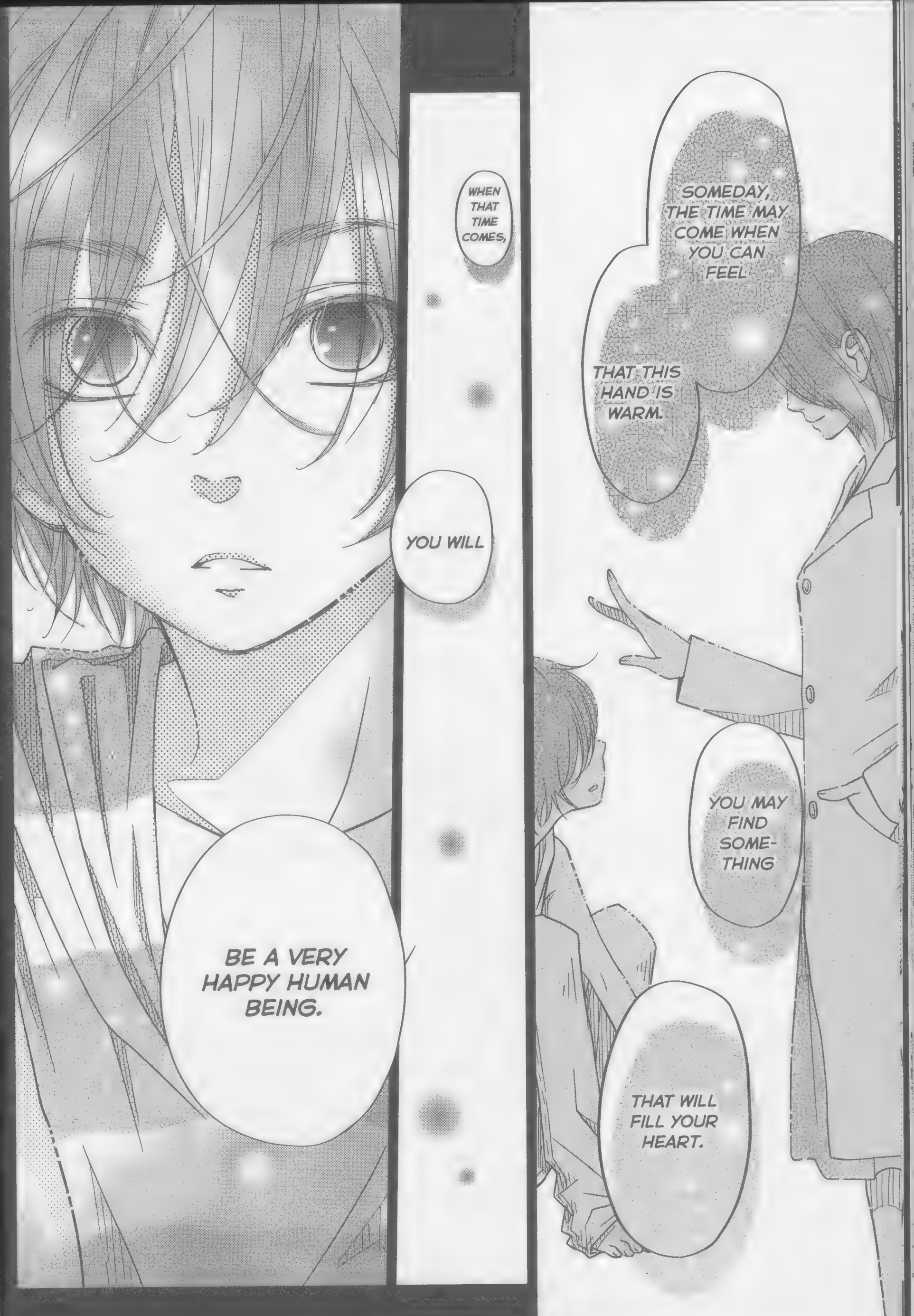

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO START JUNIOR HIGH THE OTHER DAY.
WHAT'S THIS I HEAR ABOUT YOU STARTING A RIOT TODAY?
...IT WAS
THEIR FAULT.
THEY WERE
LOOKING AT ME.
I DIDN'T LIKE
THE LOOK IN THEIR EYES.
OH.
SO TO YOU, IT WAS A TYPE OF SELF DEFENSE.
BUT FROM WHAT THEY TOLD ME TODAY, I UNDERSTAND THAT THE FIRST KID YOU ATTACKED WAS BEING PRETTY NICE TO YOU.
SO WHY WOULD YOU NEED TO HIT HIM? AND WHY SO MANY TIMES THAT HE COULDN'T STAND UP?
AND WHY
ARE YOU SITTING THERE
CRYING?
ARE THOSE TEARS OF REGRET?
OR TEARS OF PITY?
IF PITY, IS IT FOR THE BOY?
OR FOR YOURSE-
...SHUT UP!
BAM
POP
...THIS IS HARD.
HOW DID I DO THIS WITH MITSUYOSHI?

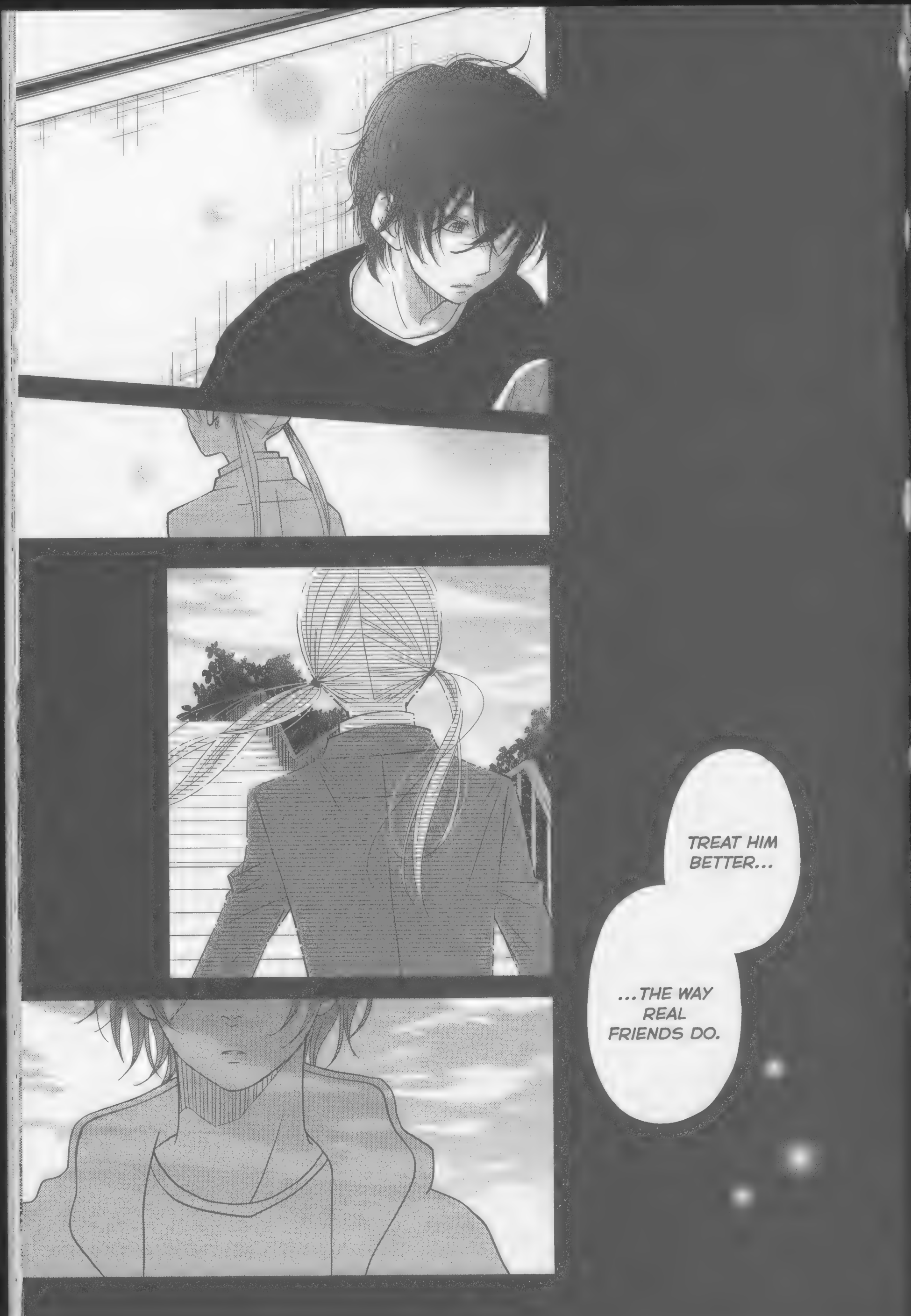

All Natural Delicious MILK
...WHAT A WASTE.
I LIKE THIS CEREAL.
I CAN'T EAT THAT STUFF EVERY DAY!
WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY FIND WRONG WITH IT?
LICK
YOU CAN'T? I EAT IT EVERY DAY, AND I NEVER GET SICK OF IT.
...WHAT'S WITH THE BRAT?
THAT'S HARU-KUN. MY BROTHER'S KID.
OH.
SO YOU'RE YUZAN'S KID BRO—
ガッ
WHACK
...
MITSUYOSHI! STOP IT!
BE QUIET!
ガッ
WHACK
ゴッ
ボゴッ
BOFF
ドゴッ

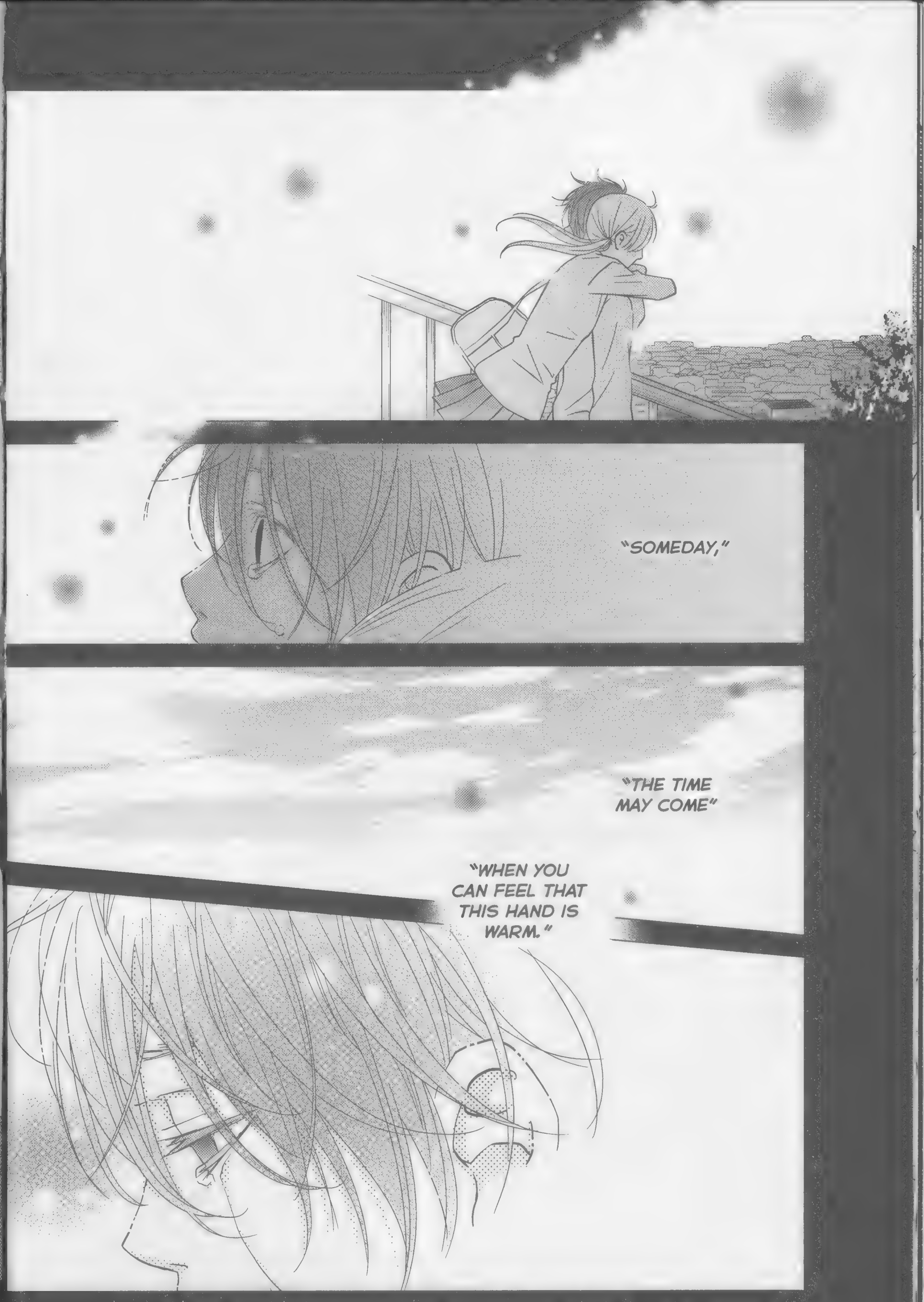

KACHAK
ガチャ
WHAT'S THIS GUY!
サルだ
A MONKEY!
OH, YOU'RE HERE AGAIN, HARU-KUN?
THAT'S SAYURI-KUN. HE'S A CHIMPANZEE.
DO YOU LIKE HIM?
I LOVE ANIMALS!
SILLY BOY. HUMANS ARE ANIMALS, TOO, YOU KNOW.
"MAN IS THE LORD OF CREATION"?
SUCH AN OLD-FASHIONED IDEA.
HA-RU-KUN.
WHAT DO YOU THINK A HUMAN IS?
HUH? A PERSON, DUH.
ANIMALIA CHORDATA MAMMALIA PRIMATES HOMINIDAE HOMO SAPIENS!
THE MOST INCOMPREHENSIBLE CREATURE ON THE EARTH!
THAT'S RIGHT, BUT IT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.
WHAT MAKES A HUMAN HUMAN?

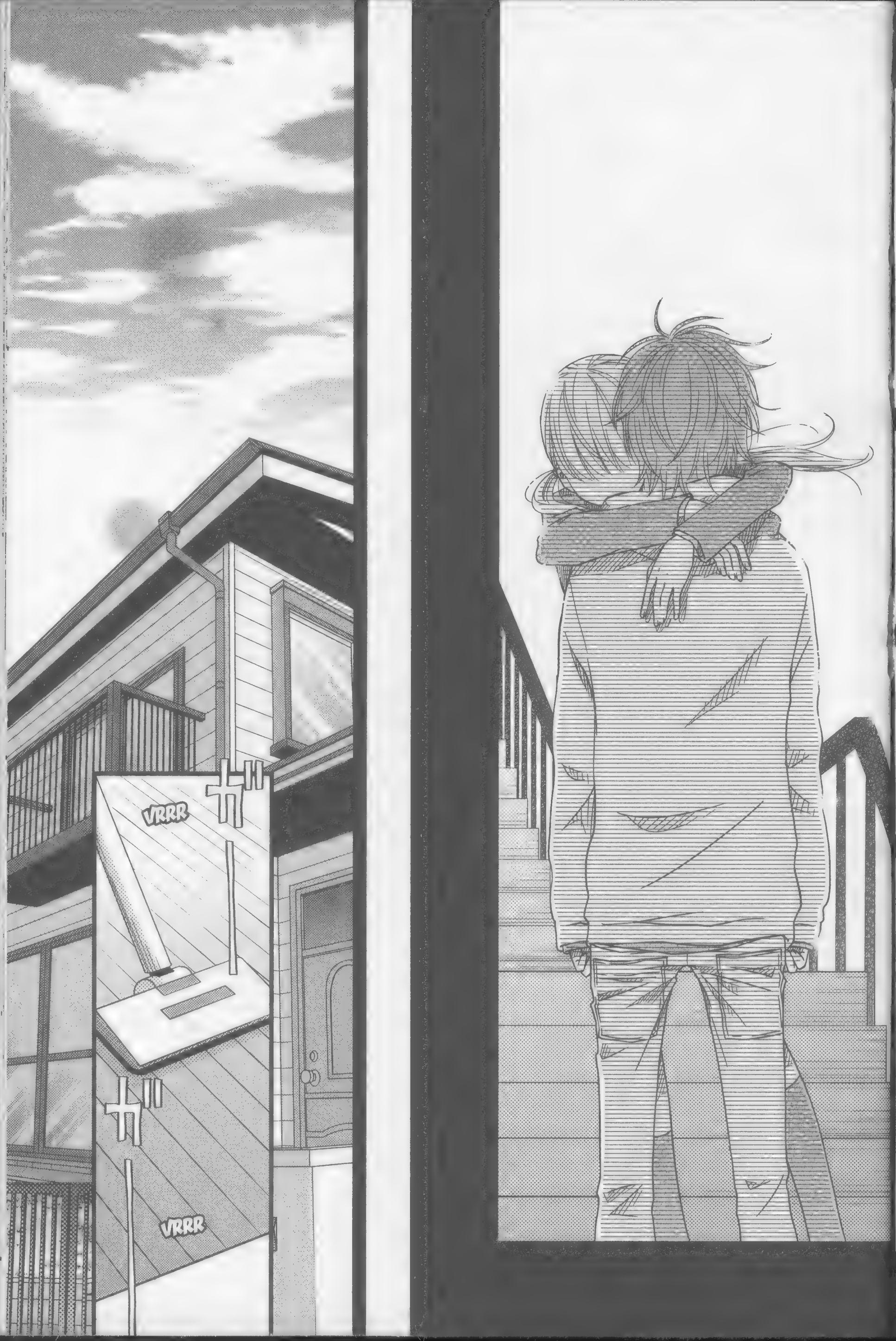

WHAT MAKES A HUMAN HUMAN
IS EDUCATION,
LANGUAGE,
TOOLS,
AND FINALLY
LOVE.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.
ERGO,
YOU ARE NOT HUMAN.
MUMBLE MUMBLE
ゴニョゴニョ
WHAT THE HECK? I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.
IT'S, Y'KNOW. WHEN A MAN AND A WOMAN...
THIS WATER, FOR EXAMPLE.
DO YOU THINK IT'S COLD? OR WARM?
?? IT'S COLD, DUH.
HOW DO YOU KNOW? YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED IT.
WHAT YOU'RE DOING
IS TAKING SOMETHING THAT YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT, AND REPLACING IT WITH SOMETHING FAMILIAR TO YOU.
BUT YOU HAVE FAR TOO LITTLE EXPERIENCE TO GET AWAY WITH THAT.
す
SS...
ビク
!!
WINCE!!

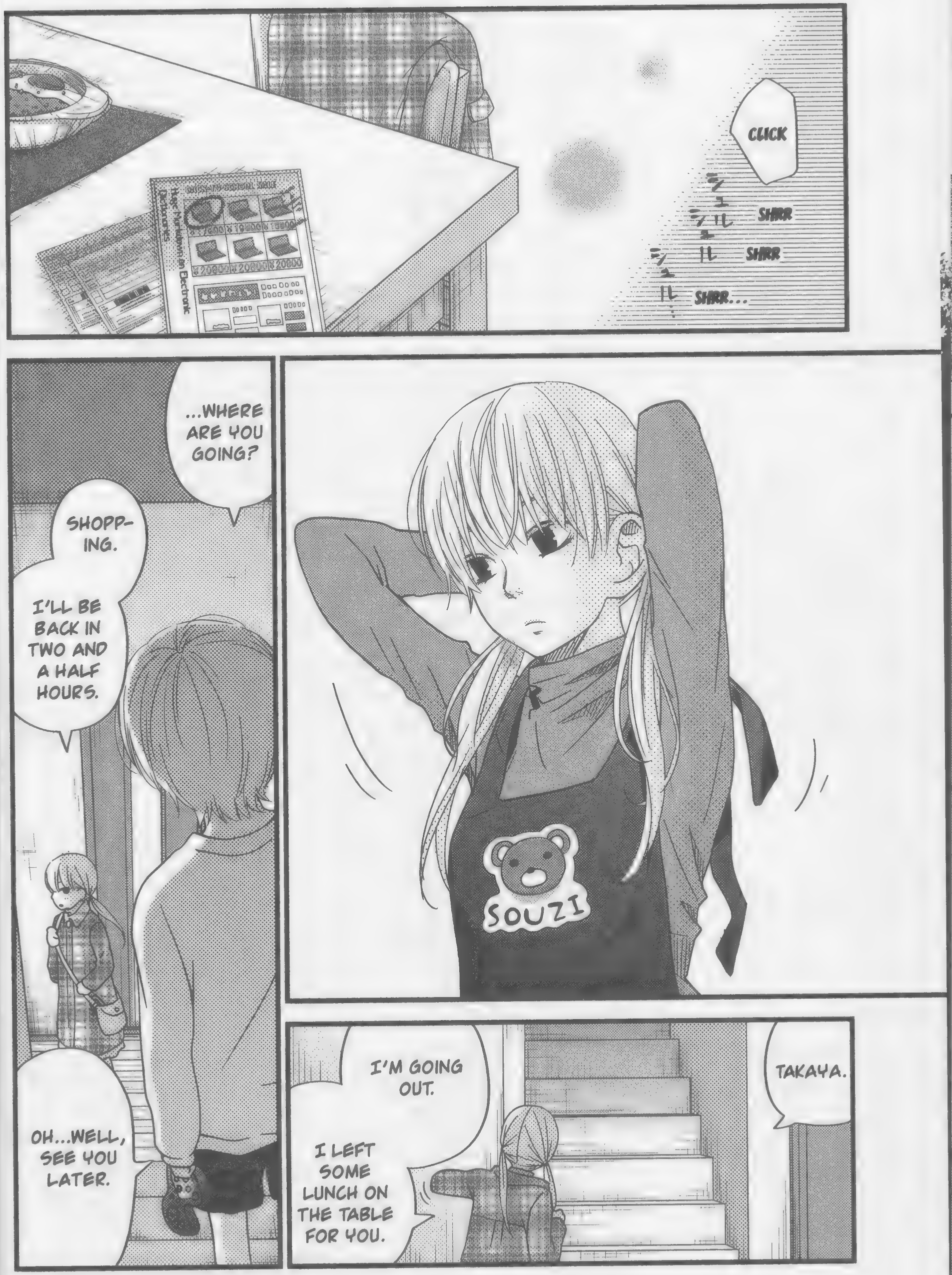

IT MUST BE TRYING.
THAT'S WHY, TO YOU, "OTHER PEOPLE" ARE THINGS THAT HURT YOU.
AND ANY SECURITY THAT YOU FEEL IS ACCOMPANIED BY INSECURITY.
THE WORD "WARM"
SOUNDS COLD TO YOUR MIND.
...I KNOW, HARU-KUN.
I'M GOING TO CAST A SPELL ON YOU.

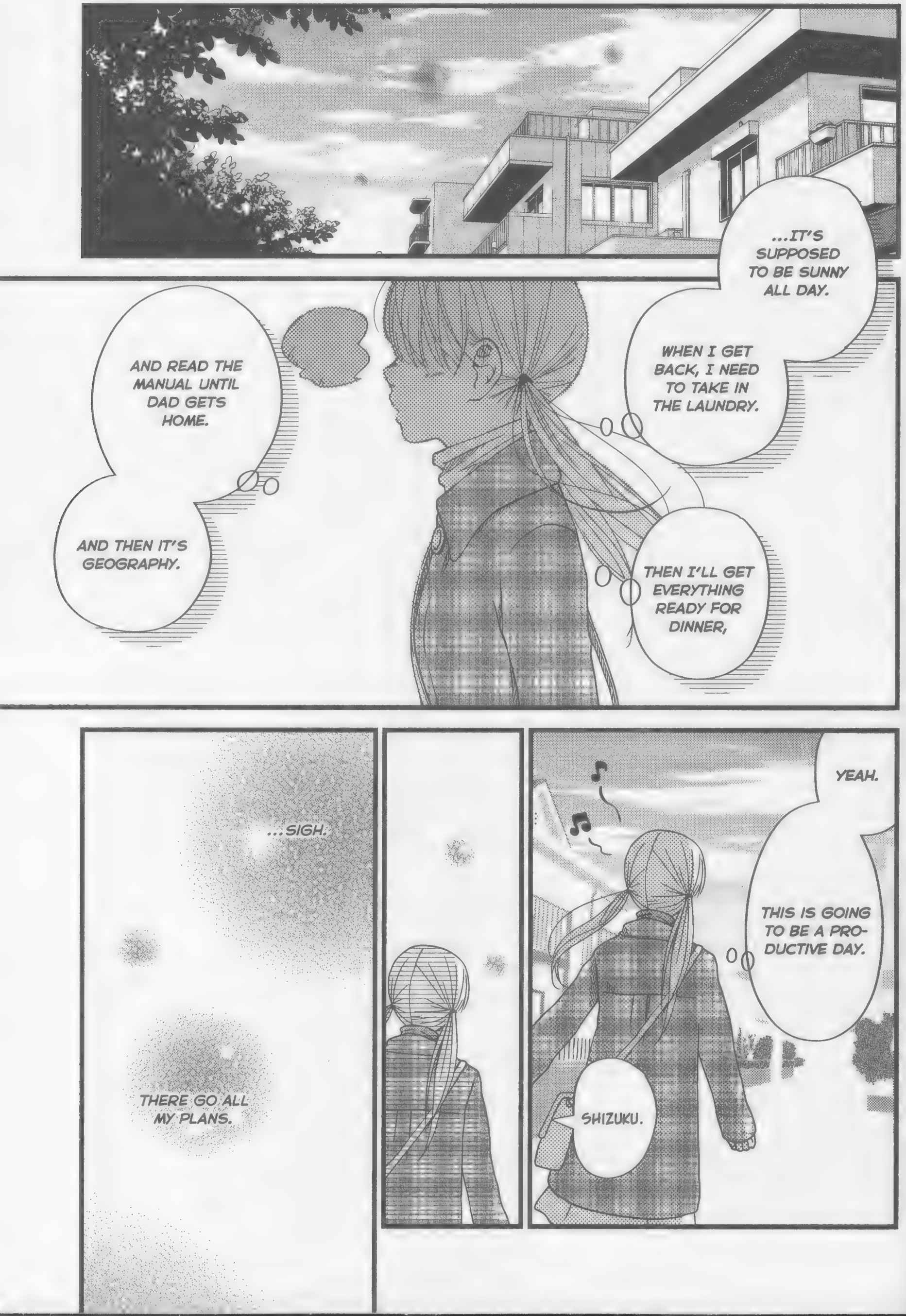

SOMEDAY, THE TIME MAY COME WHEN YOU CAN FEEL
THAT THIS HAND IS WARM.
YOU MAY FIND SOME-THING
THAT WILL FILL YOUR HEART.
WHEN THAT TIME COMES,
YOU WILL
BE A VERY HAPPY HUMAN BEING.

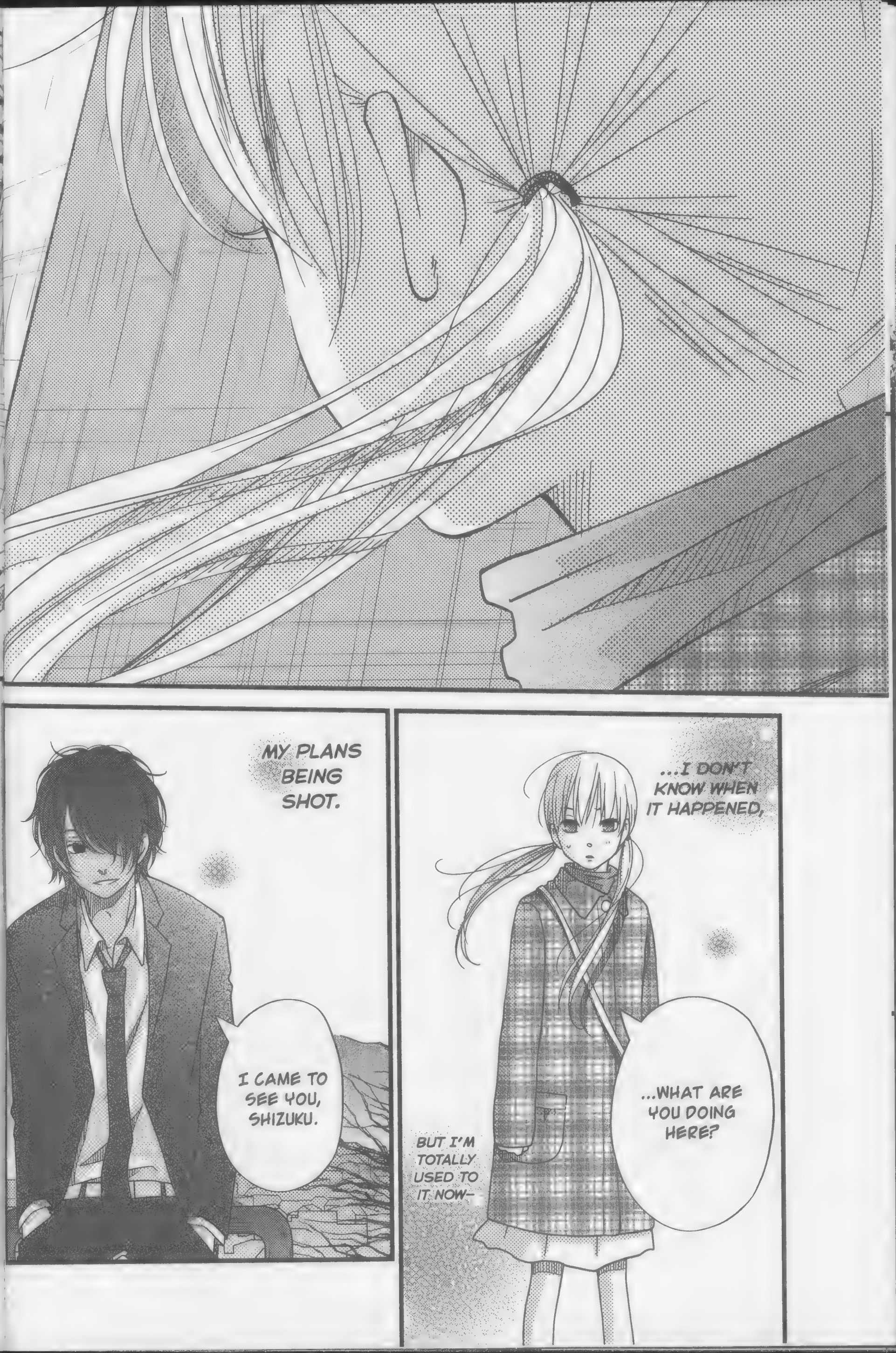

TREAT HIM BETTER...
...THE WAY REAL FRIENDS DO.

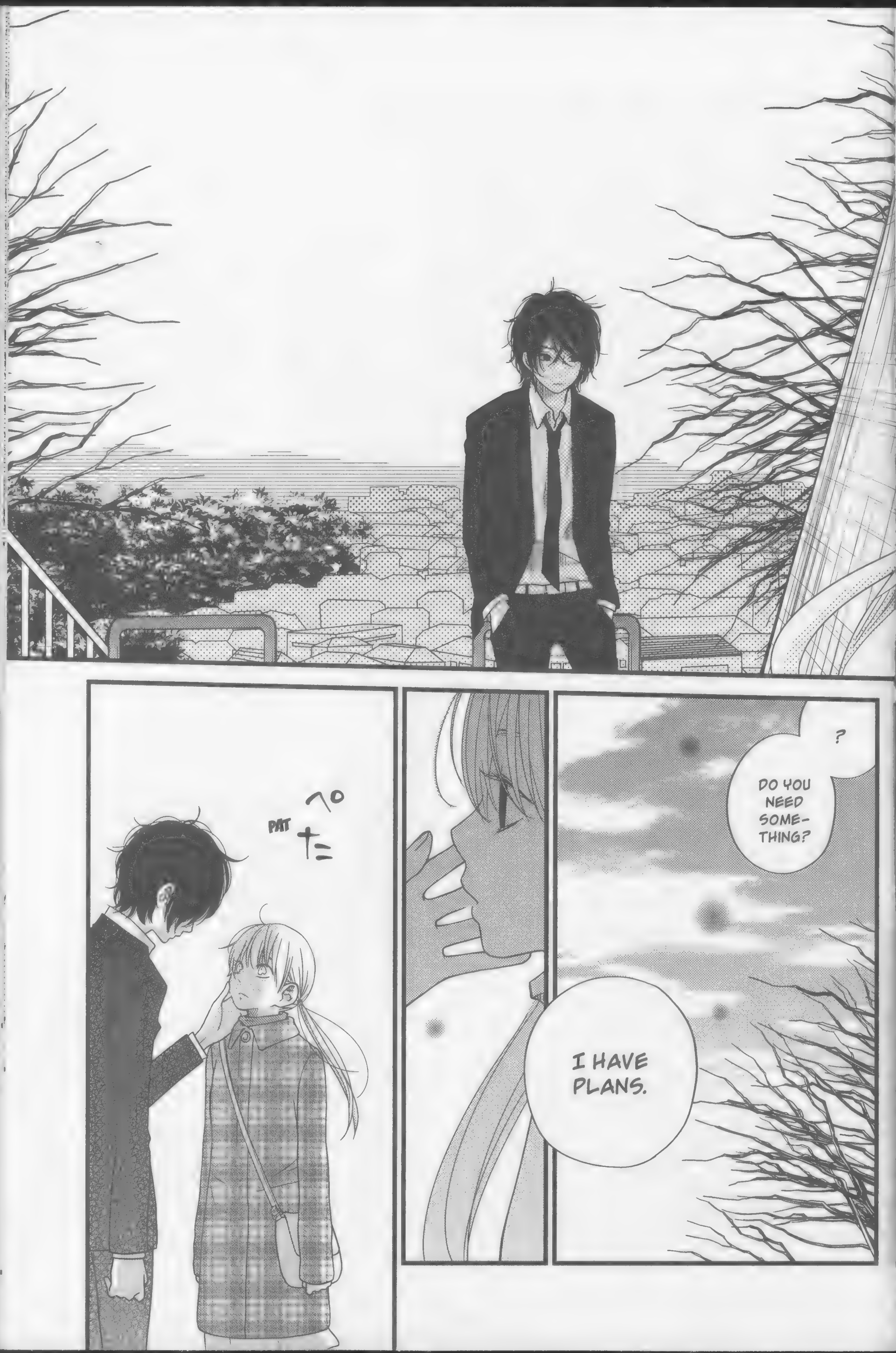

"SOMEDAY,"
"THE TIME MAY COME"
"WHEN YOU CAN FEEL THAT THIS HAND IS WARM."

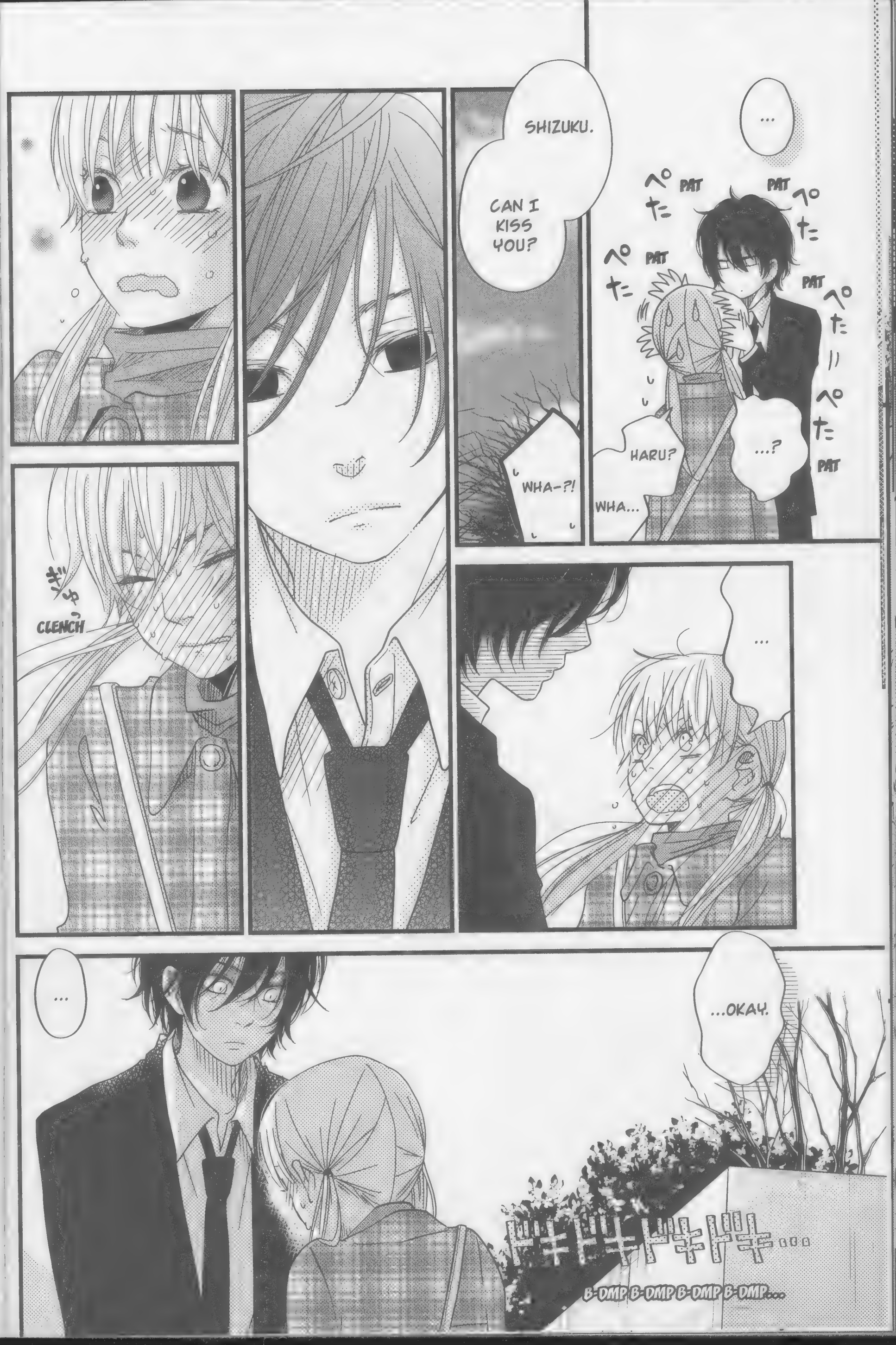

VRRR
VRRR

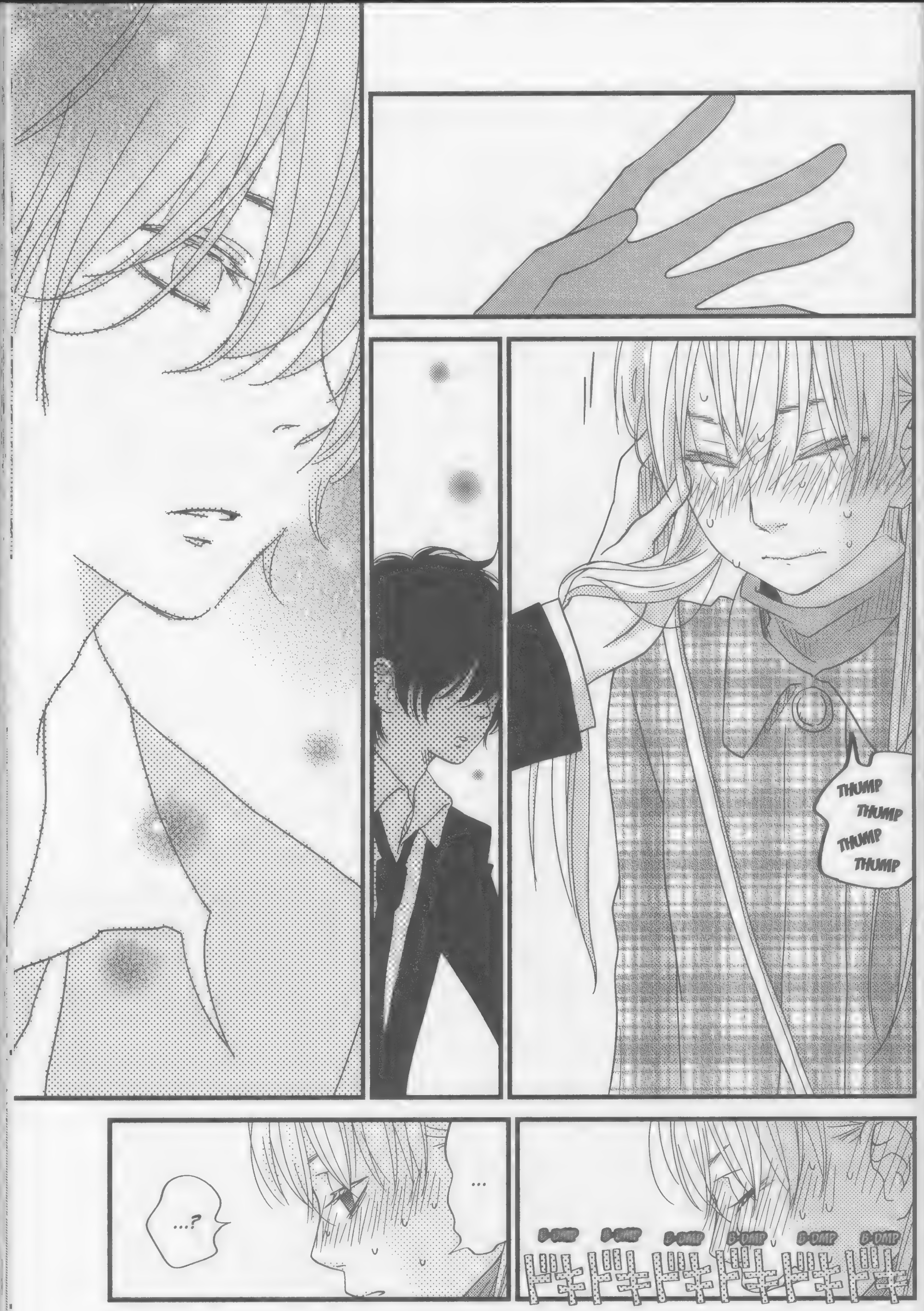

CLICK
シュル SHRR
シュル SHRR
シュル SHRR...
TAKAYA.
I'M GOING OUT.
I LEFT SOME LUNCH ON THE TABLE FOR YOU.
...WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
SHOPPING.
I'LL BE BACK IN TWO AND A HALF HOURS.
OH...WELL, SEE YOU LATER.
SOUZI

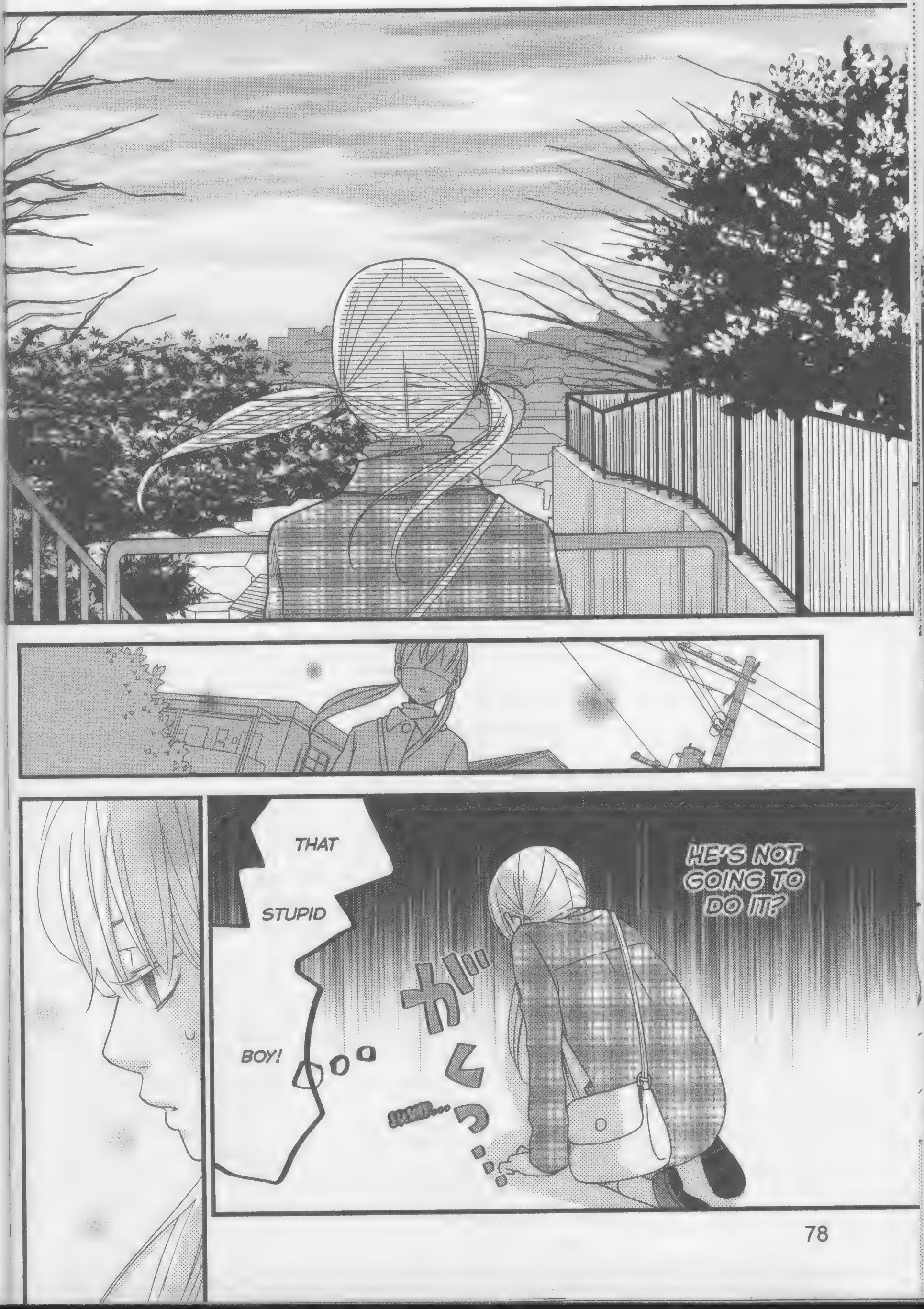

...IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE SUNNY ALL DAY.
WHEN I GET BACK, I NEED TO TAKE IN THE LAUNDRY.
THEN I'LL GET EVERYTHING READY FOR DINNER,
AND READ THE MANUAL UNTIL DAD GETS HOME.
AND THEN IT'S GEOGRAPHY.
YEAH.
THIS IS GOING TO BE A PRODUCTIVE DAY.
SHIZUKU.
...SIGH.
THERE GO ALL MY PLANS.

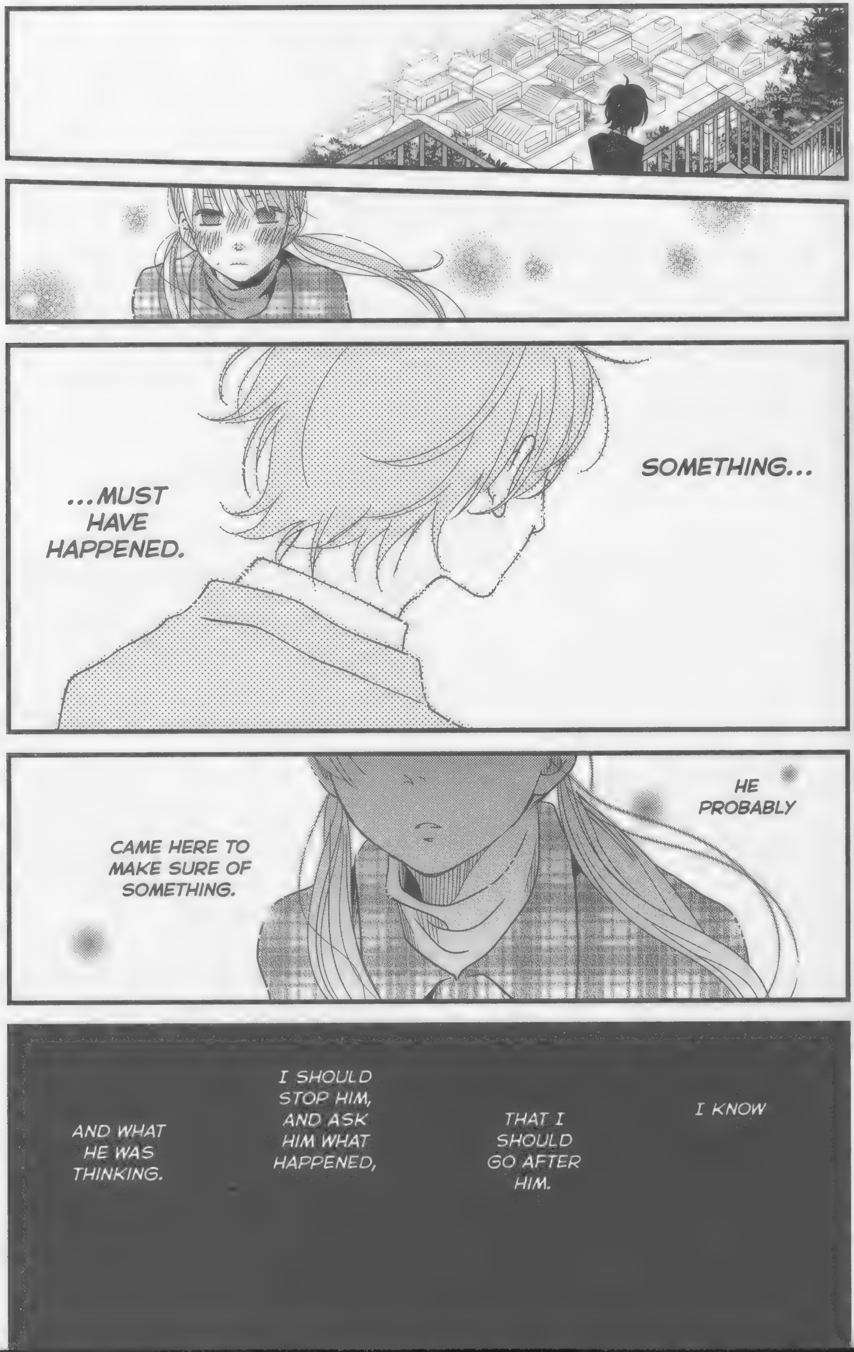

...I DON'T KNOW WHEN IT HAPPENED,
BUT I'M TOTALLY USED TO IT NOW—
...WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
MY PLANS BEING SHOT.
I CAME TO SEE YOU, SHIZUKU.

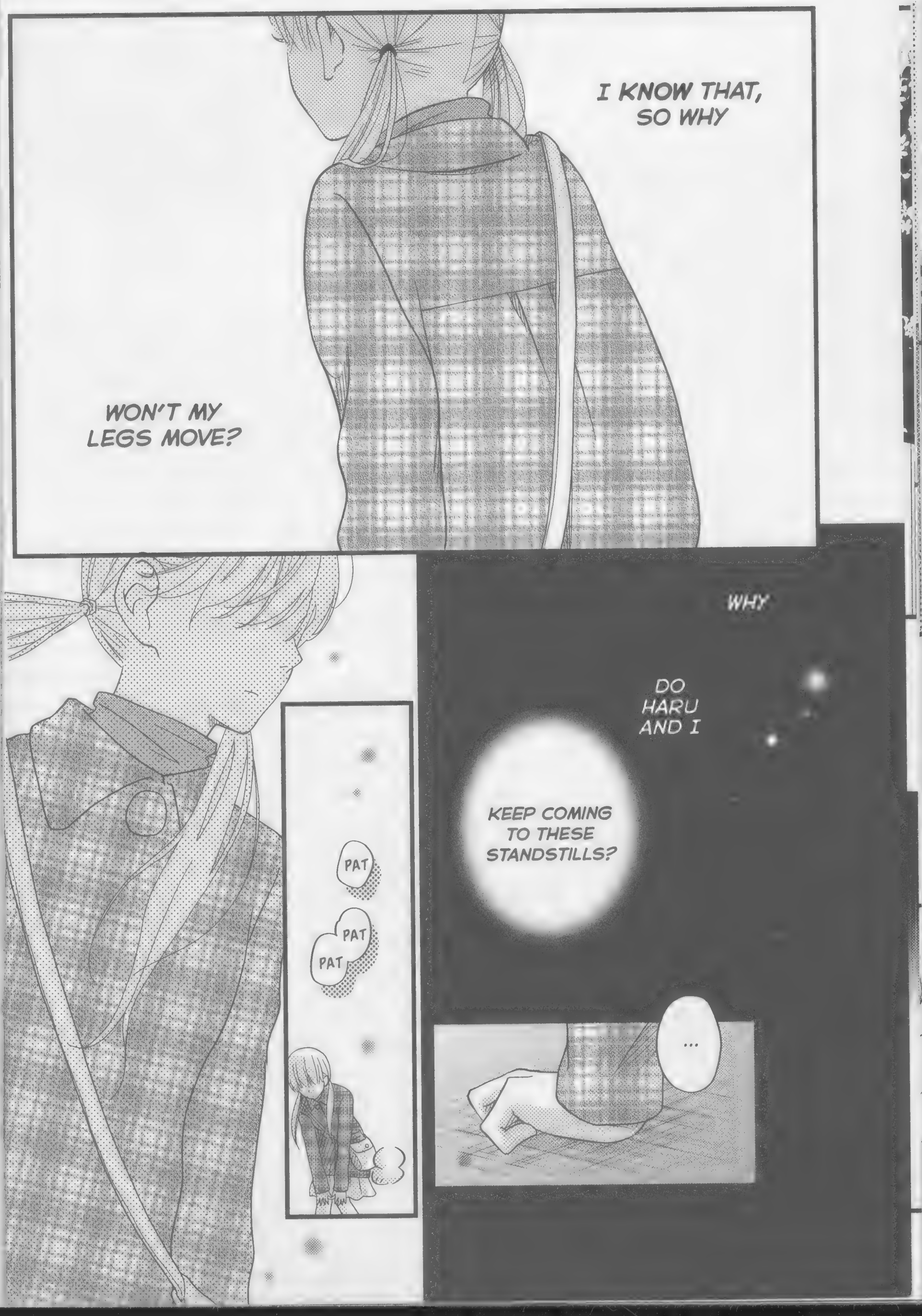

?
DO YOU NEED SOME-THING?
I HAVE PLANS.
PAT
へた

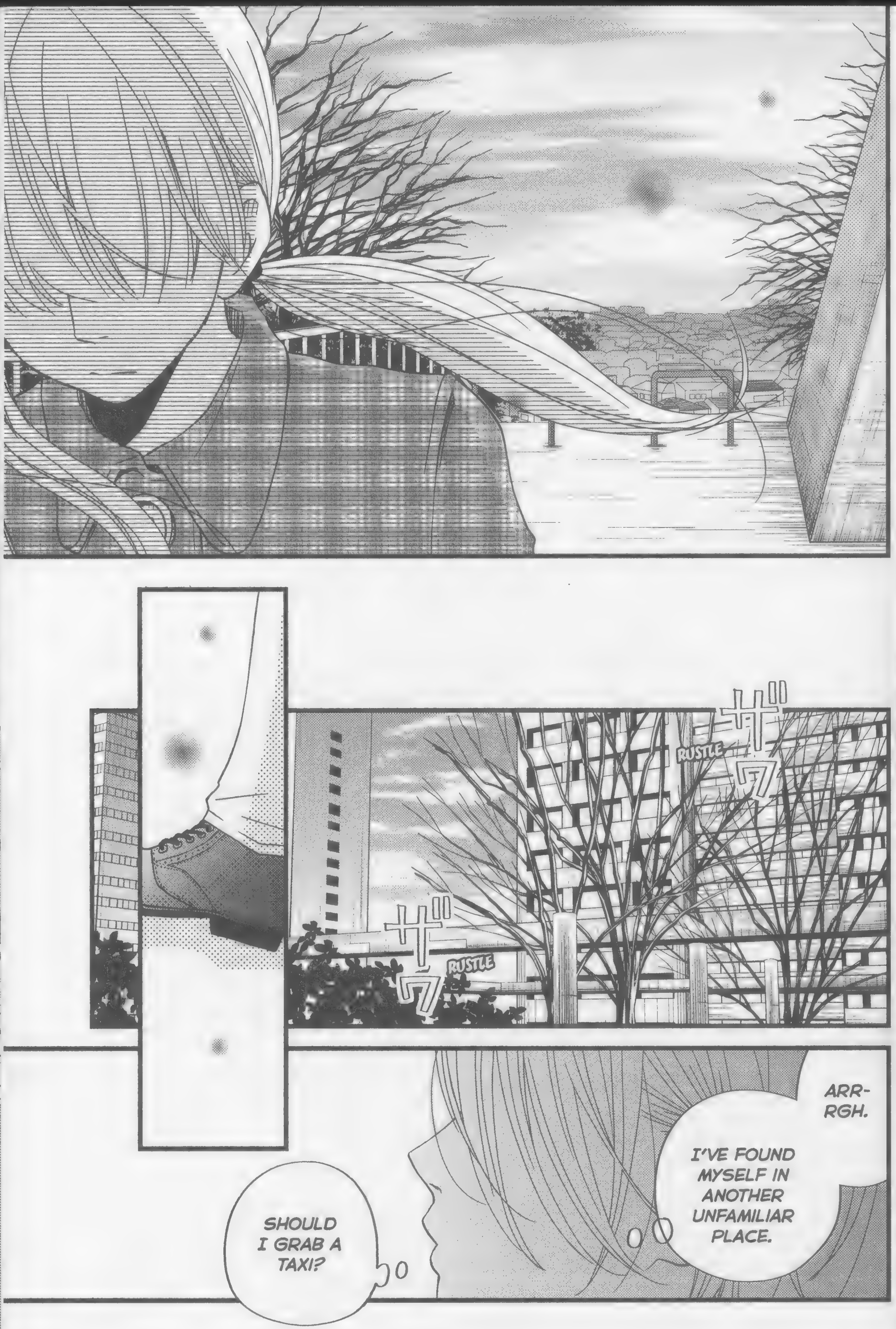

...
ぺた PAT
ぺた PAT
ぺた PAT
ぺた PAT
ぺた PAT
ぺた PAT
...?
HARU?
WHA...
SHIZUKU.
CAN I KISS YOU?
WHA-?!
ぎゅっ CLENCH
...
...
...OKAY.
ドキドキドキドキ...
B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP...

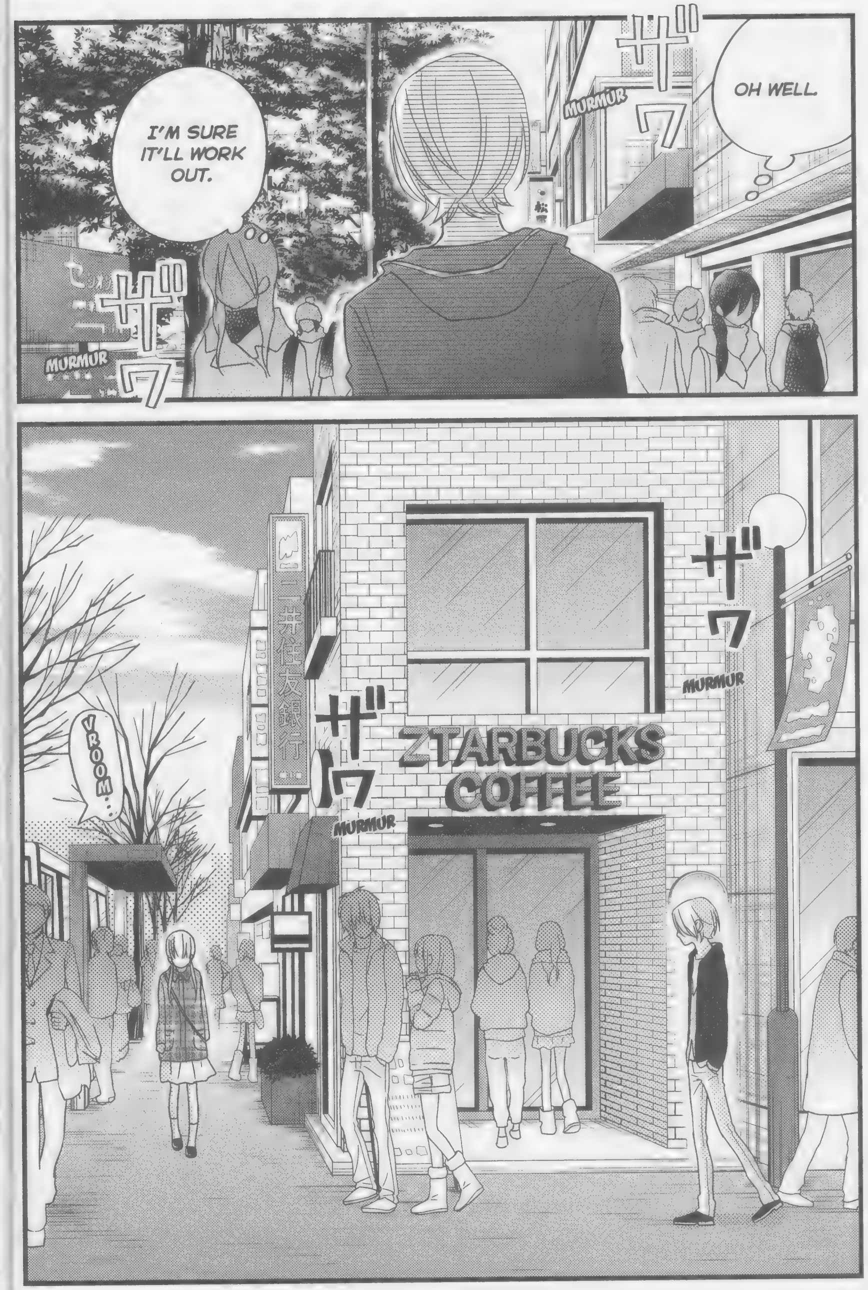

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP
...
...?
ドキドキドキドキドキドキ
B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP


HE'S NOT GOING TO DO IT?
がくっ
SLUMP...
THAT STUPID BOY!

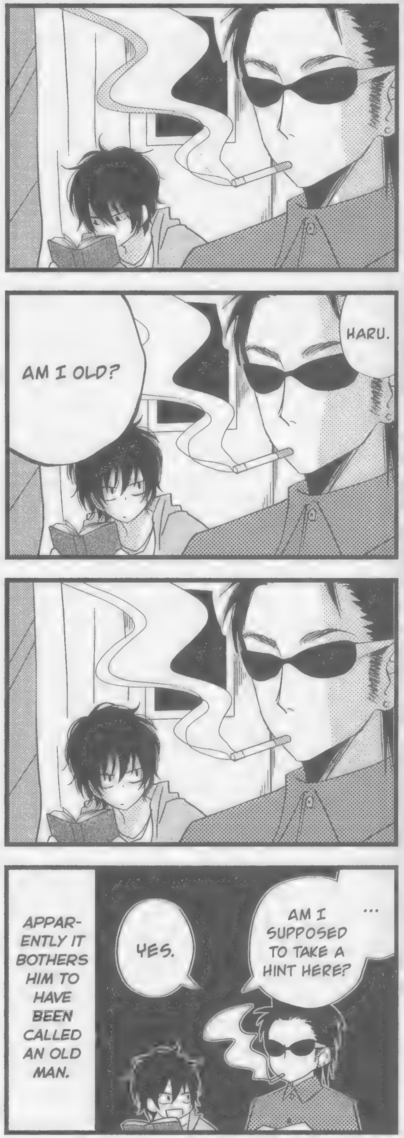

SOMETHING...
...MUST HAVE HAPPENED.
HE PROBABLY
CAME HERE TO MAKE SURE OF SOMETHING.
I KNOW
THAT I SHOULD GO AFTER HIM.
I SHOULD STOP HIM, AND ASK HIM WHAT HAPPENED,
AND WHAT HE WAS THINKING.


I KNOW THAT, SO WHY
WON'T MY LEGS MOVE?
WHY
DO HARU AND I
KEEP COMING TO THESE STANDSTILLS?
...
PAT
PAT
PAT

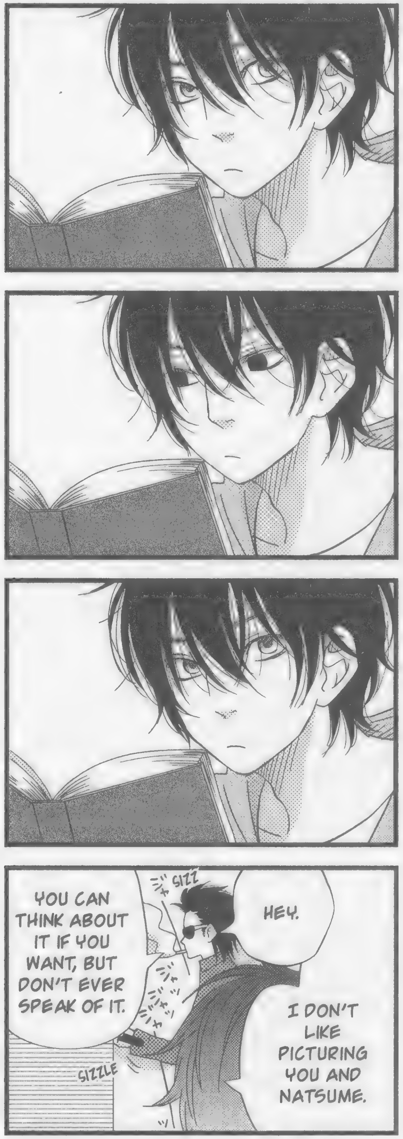

ザワ
RUSTLE
ザワ
RUSTLE
ARR-RGH.
I'VE FOUND MYSELF IN ANOTHER UNFAMILIAR PLACE.
SHOULD I GRAB A TAXI?

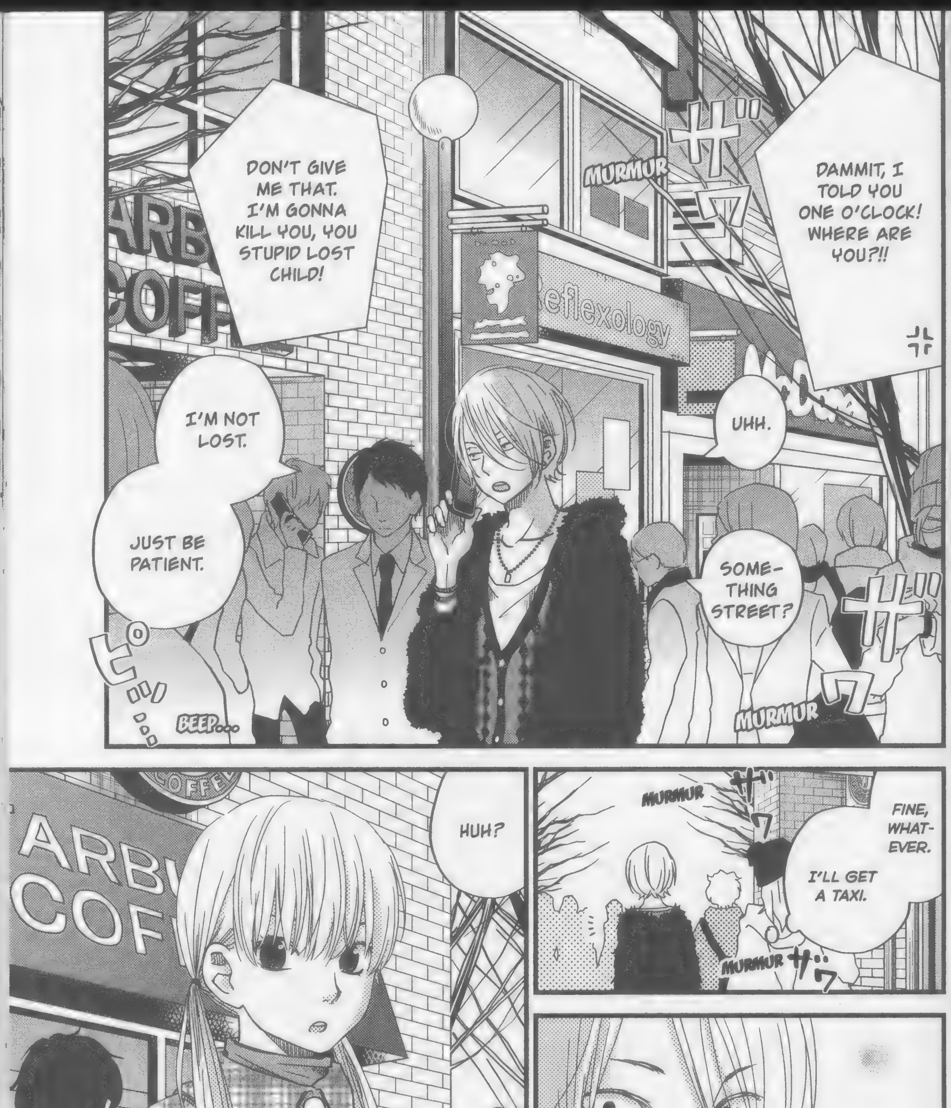

OH WELL.
ザワ
MURMUR
I'M SURE IT'LL WORK OUT.
ザワ
MURMUR
ザワ
MURMUR
ZTARBUCKS COFFEE
ザワ
MURMUR
三井住友銀行
VROOM...

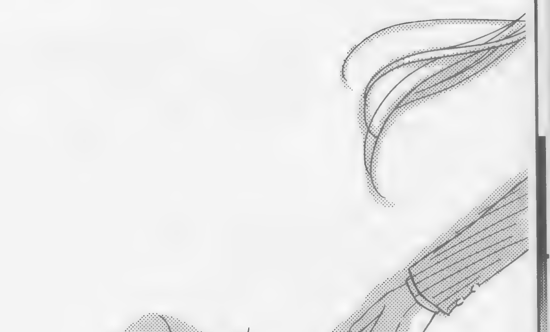
Well, from Your Point of View, Yeah

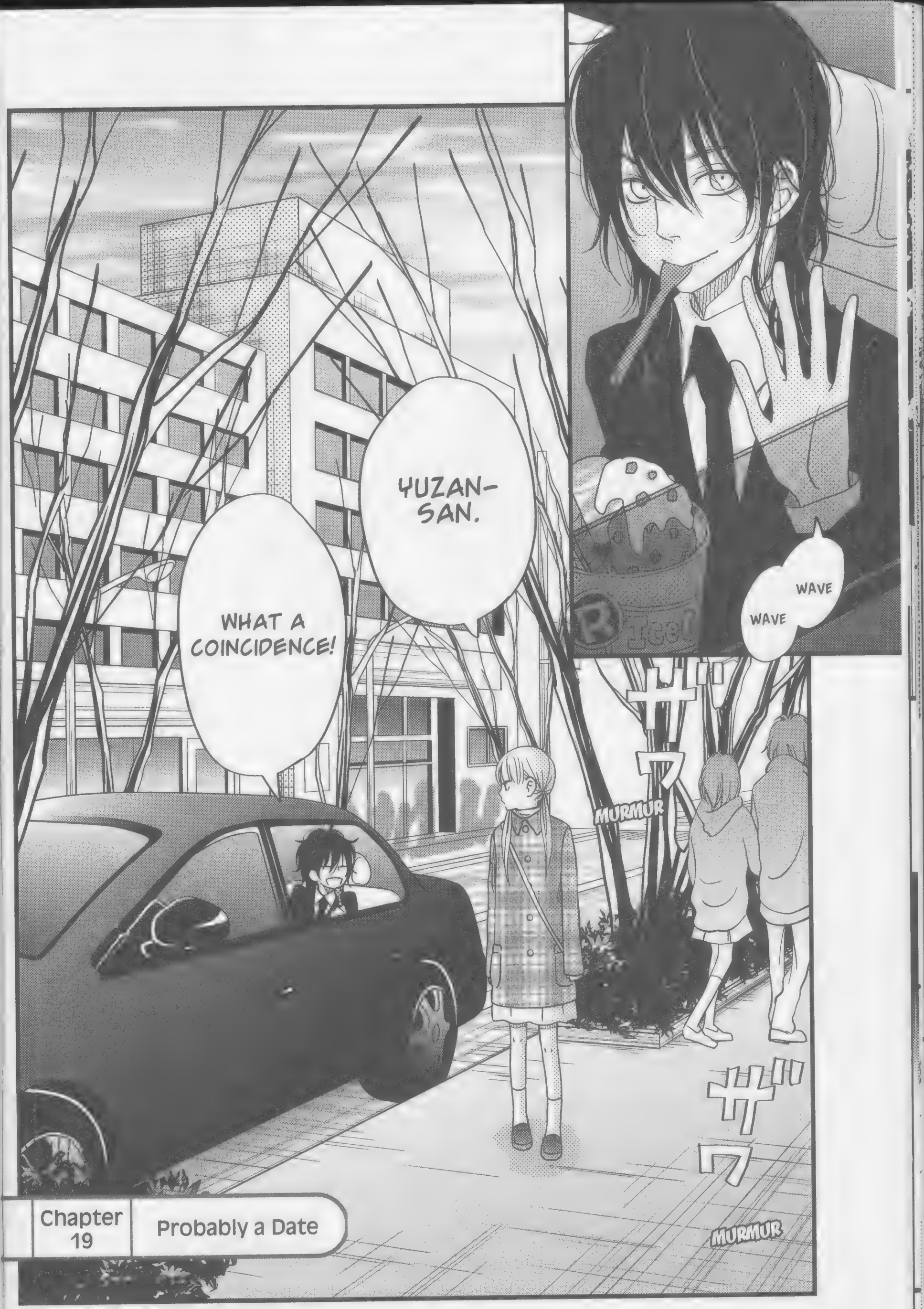

HARU.
AM I OLD?
...
AM I SUPPOSED TO TAKE A HINT HERE?
YES.
APPARENTLY IT BOTHERS HIM TO HAVE BEEN CALLED AN OLD MAN.

Natsume and Mitchan Are...


HEY.
I DON'T LIKE PICTURING YOU AND NATSUME.
SIZZ
YOU CAN THINK ABOUT IT IF YOU WANT, BUT DON'T EVER SPEAK OF IT.
SIZZLE

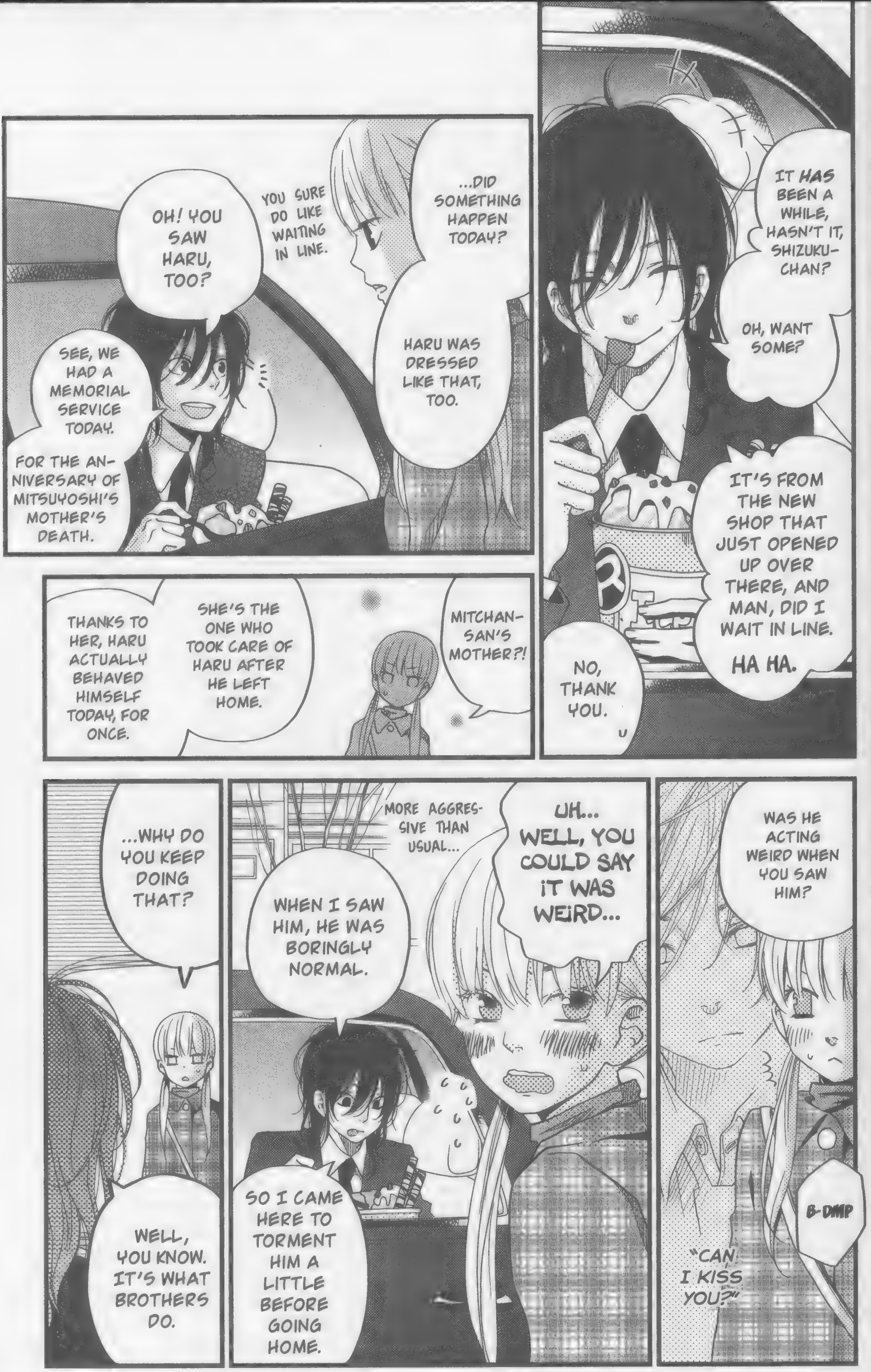

DAMMIT, I TOLD YOU ONE O'CLOCK! WHERE ARE YOU?!!
ザワ
MURMUR
DON'T GIVE ME THAT. I'M GONNA KILL YOU, YOU STUPID LOST CHILD!
UHH.
SOME-THING STREET?
ザワ
MURMUR
I'M NOT LOST.
JUST BE PATIENT.
BEEP...
ARB COFF
Reflexology
FINE, WHAT-EVER.
I'LL GET A TAXI.
ザワ
MURMUR
ザワ
MURMUR
HUH?
ARB COF

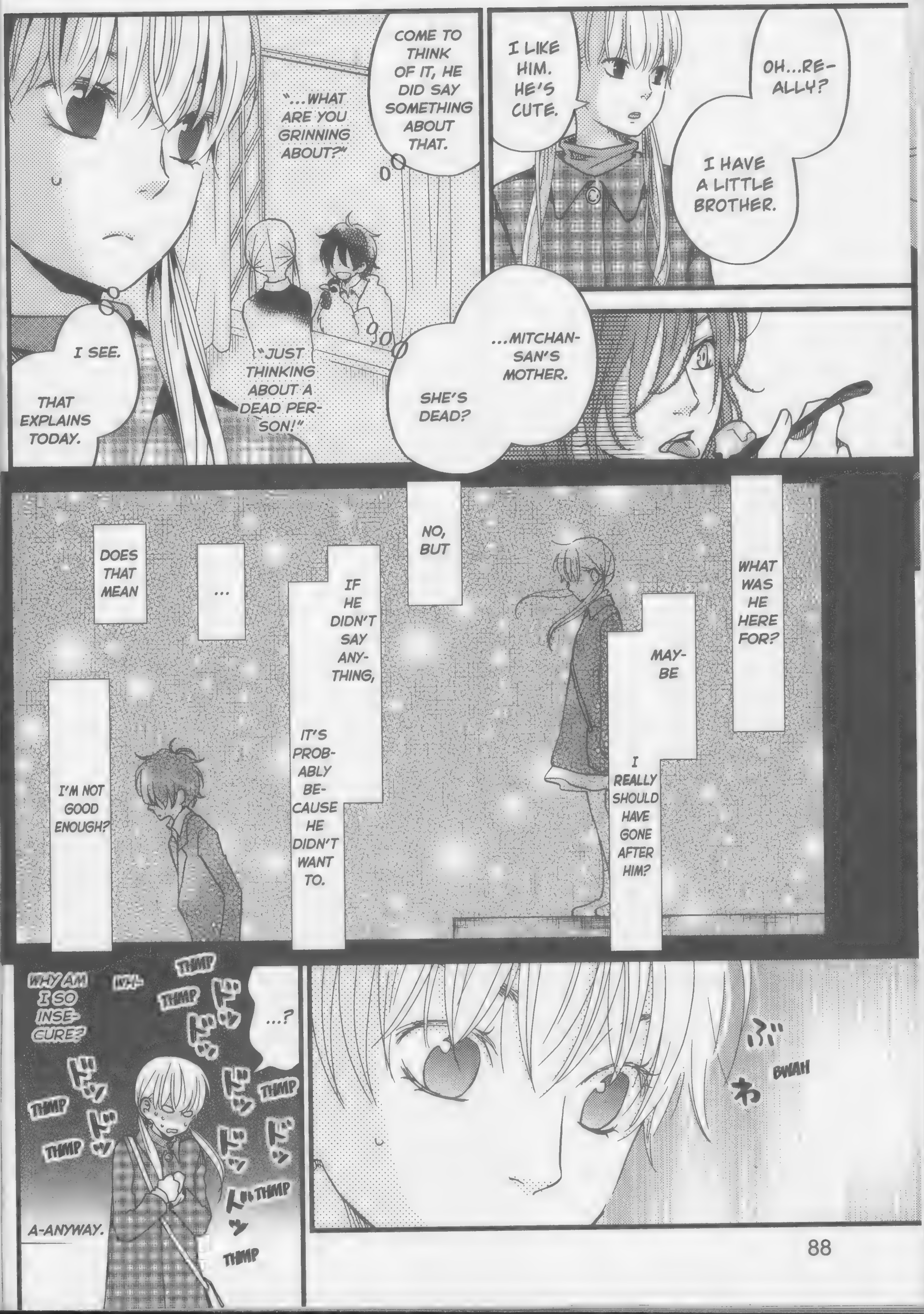


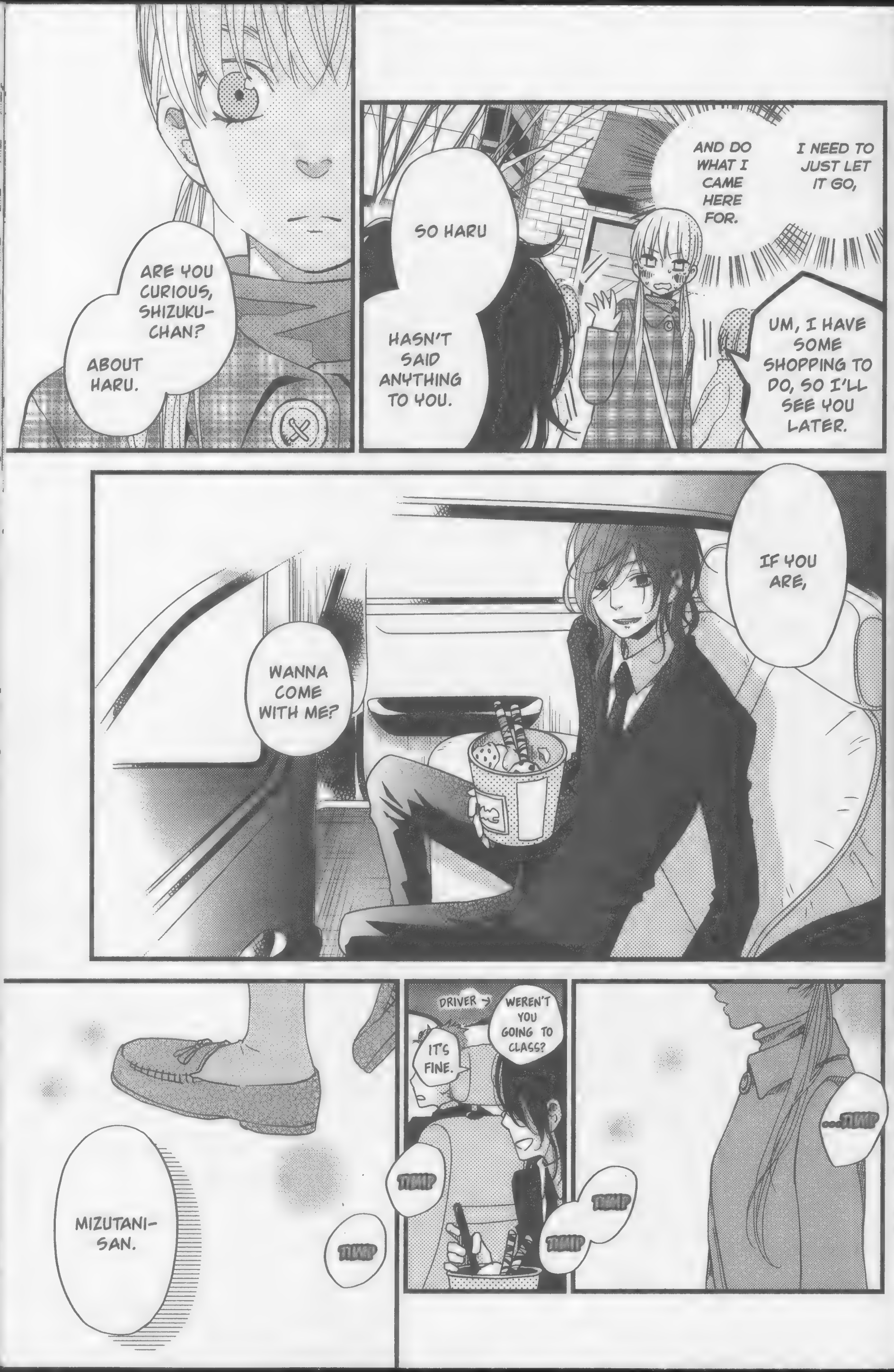

WAVE
WAVE
YUZAN-SAN.
WHAT A COINCIDENCE!
ザワ
MURMUR
ザワ
MURMUR

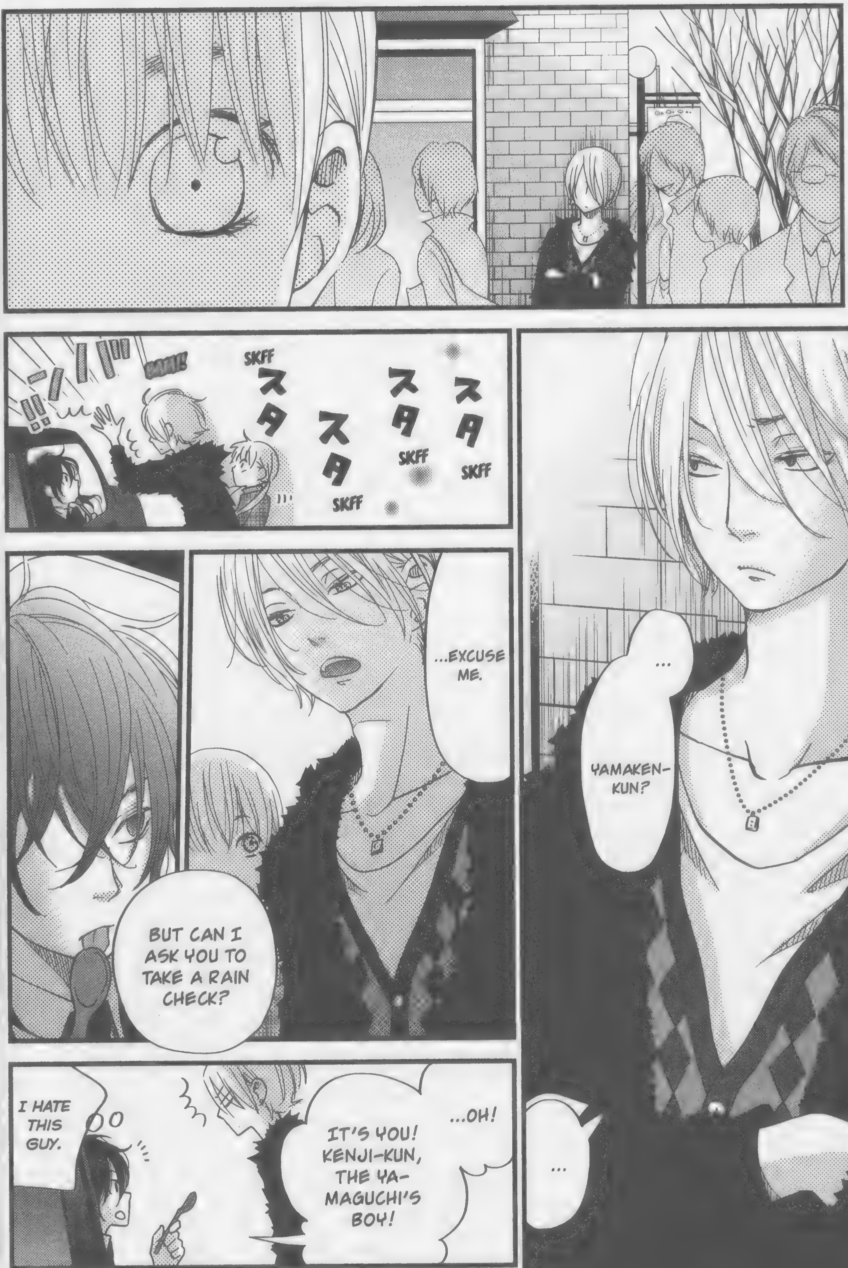
Chapter
19

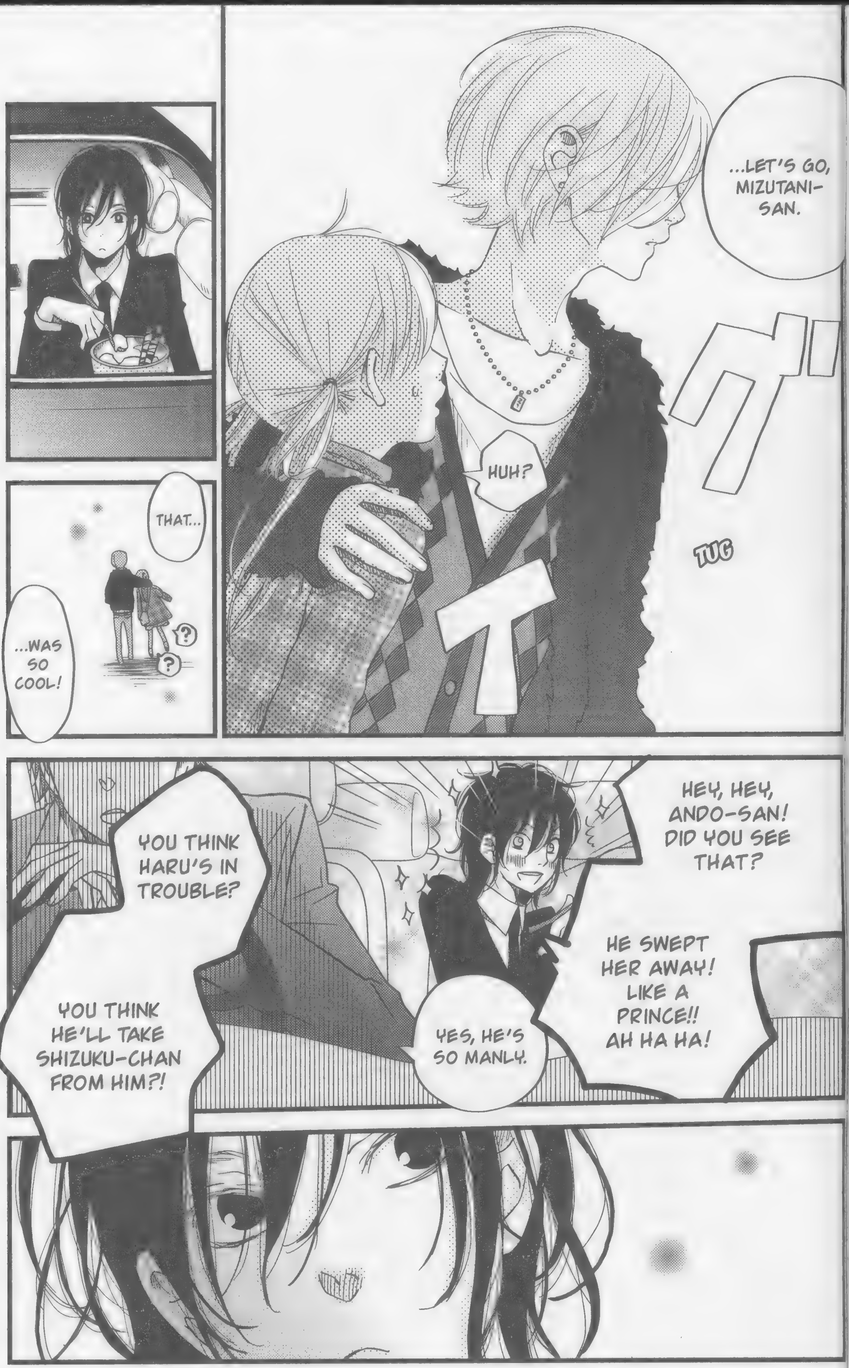
Probably a Date

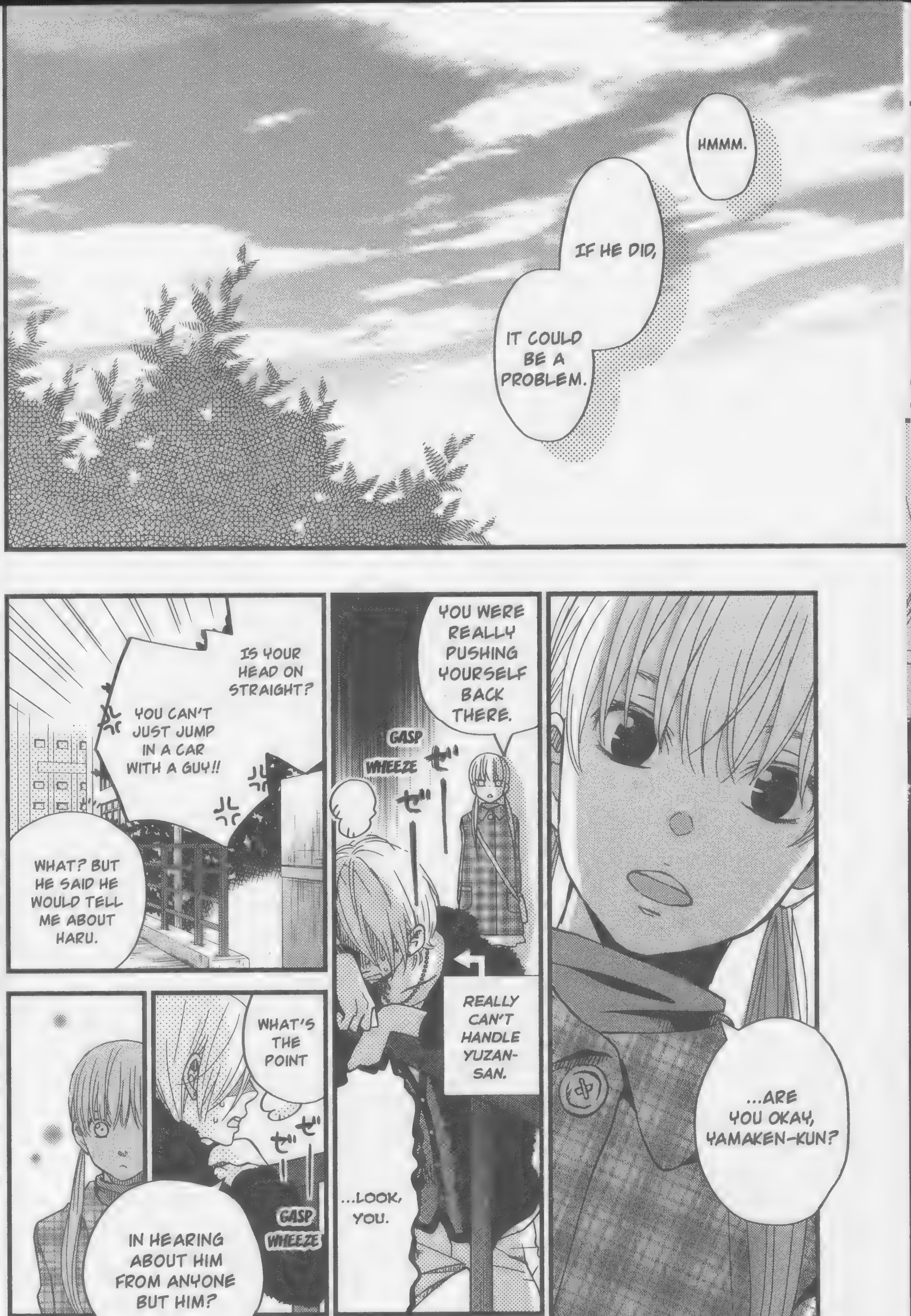

IT HAS BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT, SHIZUKU-CHAN?
OH, WANT SOME?
IT'S FROM THE NEW SHOP THAT JUST OPENED UP OVER THERE, AND MAN, DID I WAIT IN LINE. HA HA.
NO, THANK YOU.
...DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TODAY?
YOU SURE DO LIKE WAITING IN LINE.
OH! YOU SAW HARU, TOO?
HARU WAS DRESSED LIKE THAT, TOO.
SEE, WE HAD A MEMORIAL SERVICE TODAY.
FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF MITSUYOSHI'S MOTHER'S DEATH.
MITCHAN-SAN'S MOTHER?!
SHE'S THE ONE WHO TOOK CARE OF HARU AFTER HE LEFT HOME.
THANKS TO HER, HARU ACTUALLY BEHAVED HIMSELF TODAY, FOR ONCE.
WAS HE ACTING WEIRD WHEN YOU SAW HIM?
B-DMP
"CAN I KISS YOU?"
UH... WELL, YOU COULD SAY IT WAS WEIRD...
MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN USUAL...
WHEN I SAW HIM, HE WAS BORINGLY NORMAL.
SO I CAME HERE TO TORMENT HIM A LITTLE BEFORE GOING HOME.
...WHY DO YOU KEEP DOING THAT?
WELL, YOU KNOW. IT'S WHAT BROTHERS DO.

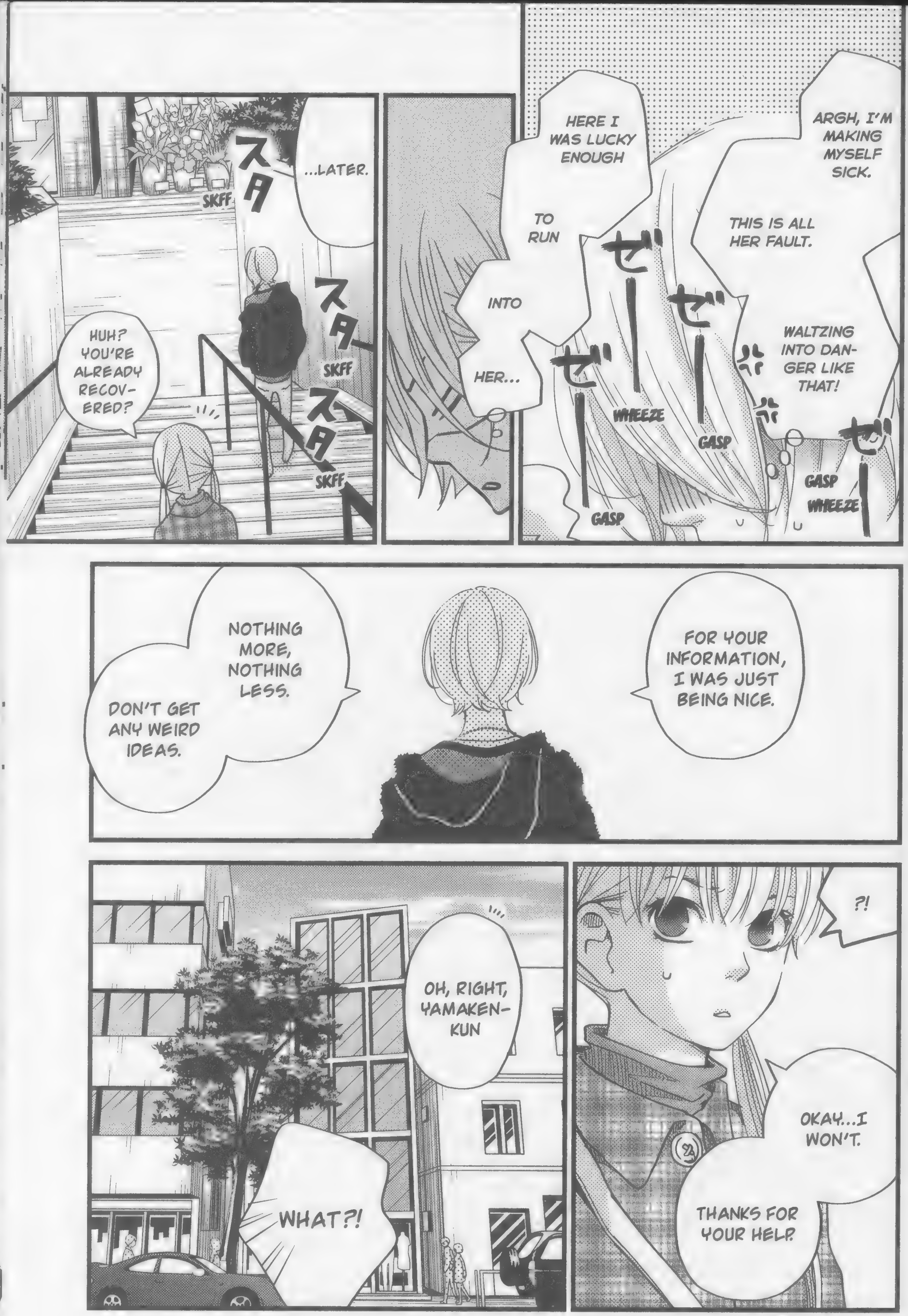

OH...REALLY?
I HAVE A LITTLE BROTHER.
I LIKE HIM. HE'S CUTE.
...MITCHAN-SAN'S MOTHER.
SHE'S DEAD?
COME TO THINK OF IT, HE DID SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THAT.
"...WHAT ARE YOU GRINNING ABOUT?"
"JUST THINKING ABOUT A DEAD PERSON!"
I SEE.
THAT EXPLAINS TODAY.
WHAT WAS HE HERE FOR?
MAYBE
I REALLY SHOULD HAVE GONE AFTER HIM?
NO, BUT
IF HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING,
IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT TO.
...
DOES THAT MEAN
I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH?
ぶ
わ
BWAH
...?
WHY AM I SO INSECURE?
THMP
THMP
ドッ
ドッ
ドッ
THMP
ドッ
THMP
ドッ
THMP
ドッ
ドッ
THMP
THMP
A-ANYWAY.

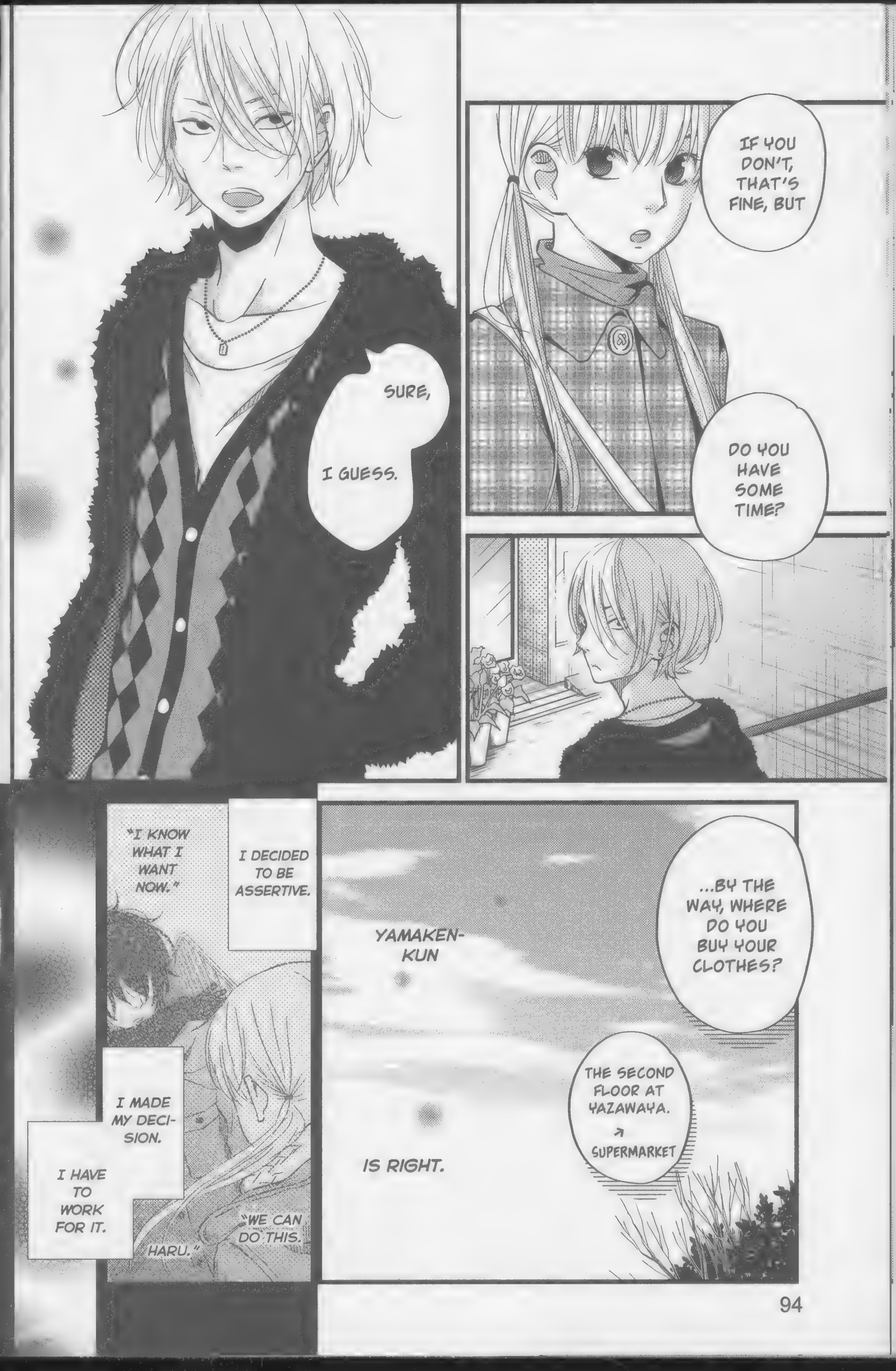

I NEED TO JUST LET IT GO,
AND DO WHAT I CAME HERE FOR.
SO HARU
HASN'T SAID ANYTHING TO YOU.
UM, I HAVE SOME SHOPPING TO DO, SO I'LL SEE YOU LATER.
ARE YOU CURIOUS, SHIZUKU-CHAN?
ABOUT HARU.
IF YOU ARE,
WANNA COME WITH ME?
...THMP
WEREN'T YOU GOING TO CLASS?
DRIVER →
IT'S FINE.
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
MIZUTANI-SAN.

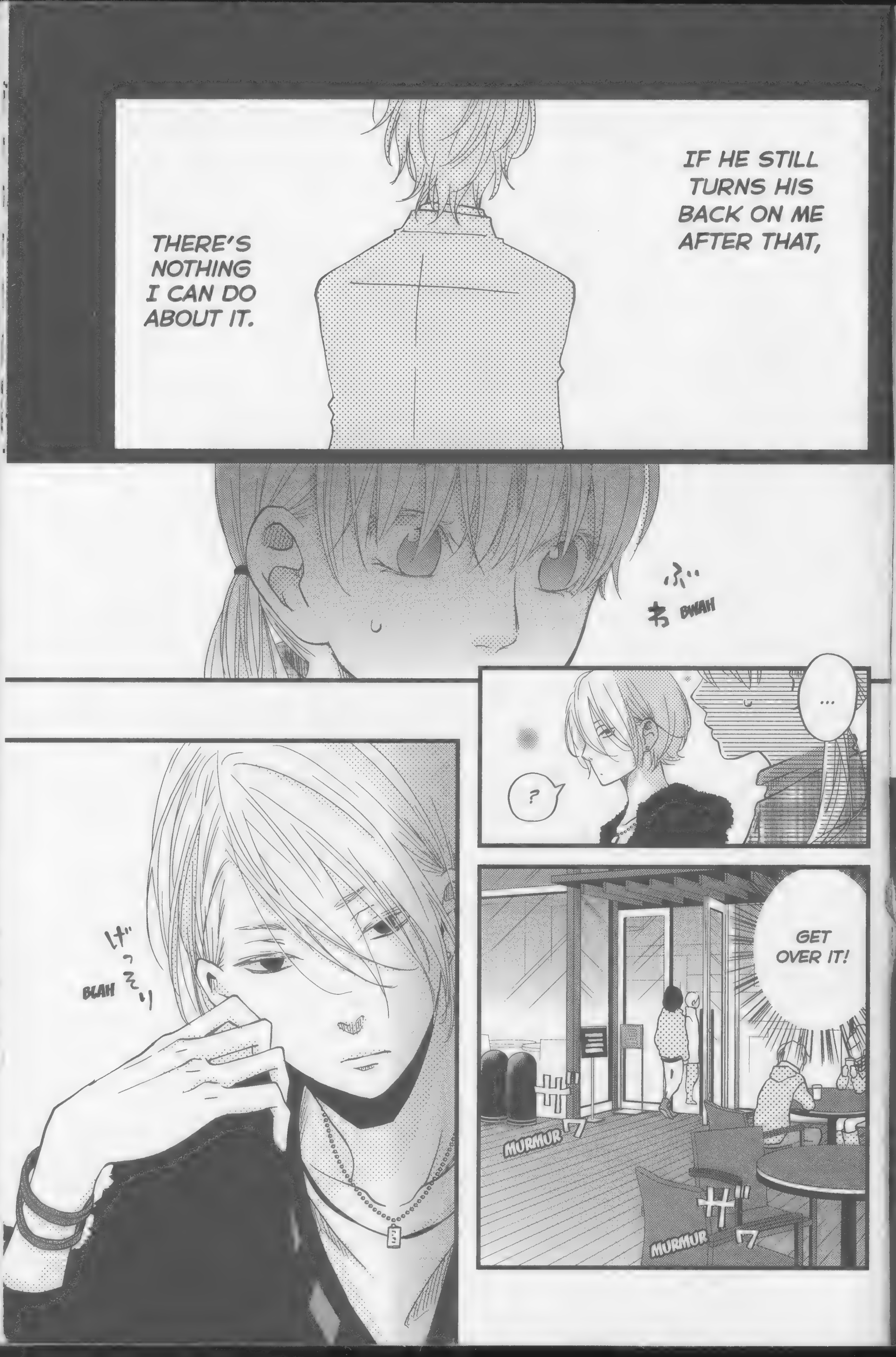

BAM!
SKFF スタ
SKFF スタ
SKFF スタ
SKFF スタ
...
YAMAKEN-KUN?
...EXCUSE ME.
BUT CAN I ASK YOU TO TAKE A RAIN CHECK?
...OH!
IT'S YOU! KENJI-KUN, THE YAMAGUCHI'S BOY!
I HATE THIS GUY.
...

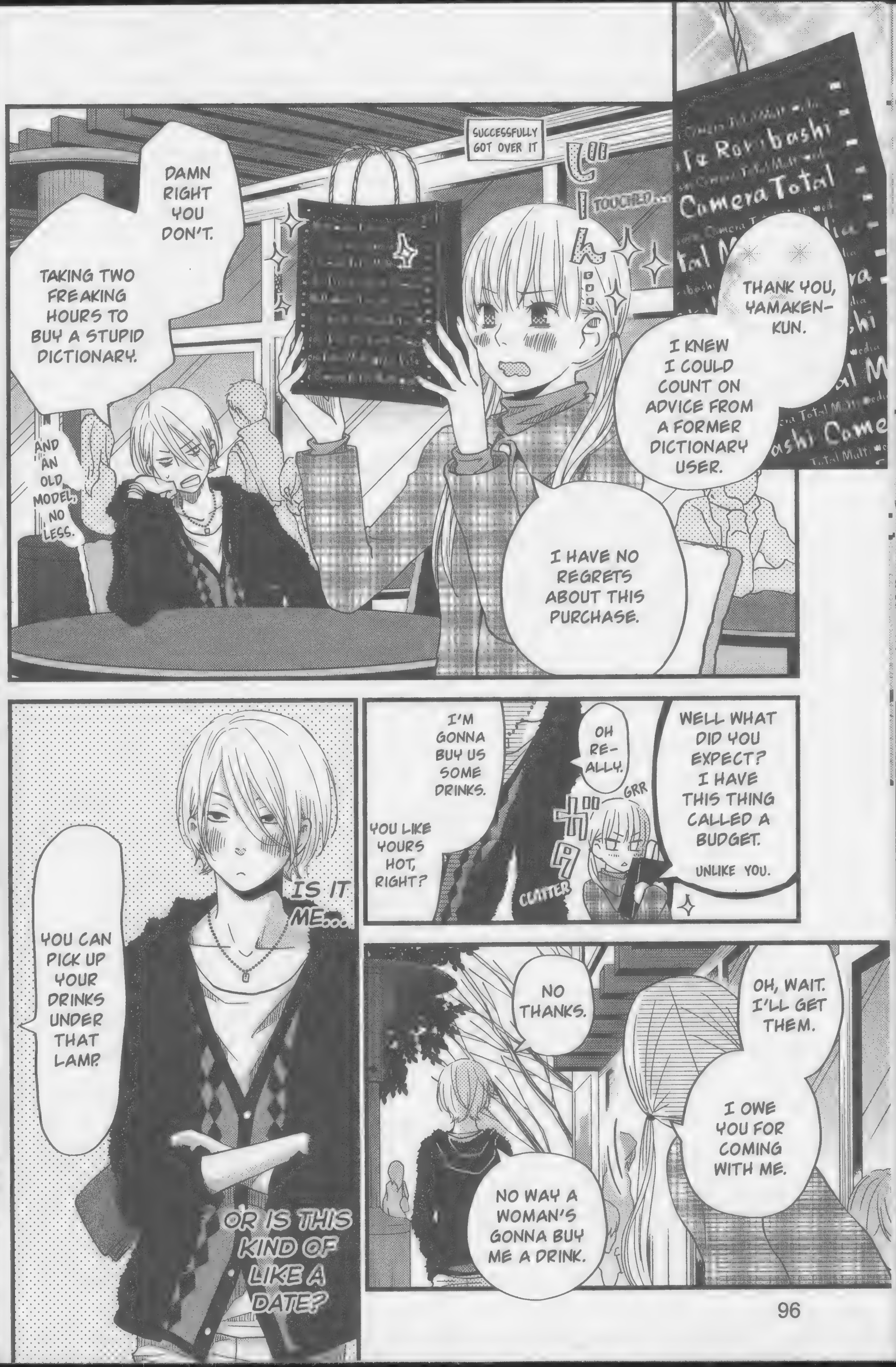

...LET'S GO, MIZUTANI-SAN.
グイ
TUG
HUH?
THAT...
...WAS SO COOL!
HEY, HEY, ANDO-SAN! DID YOU SEE THAT?
HE SWEPT HER AWAY! LIKE A PRINCE!! AH HA HA!
YES, HE'S SO MANLY.
YOU THINK HARU'S IN TROUBLE?
YOU THINK HE'LL TAKE SHIZUKU-CHAN FROM HIM?!

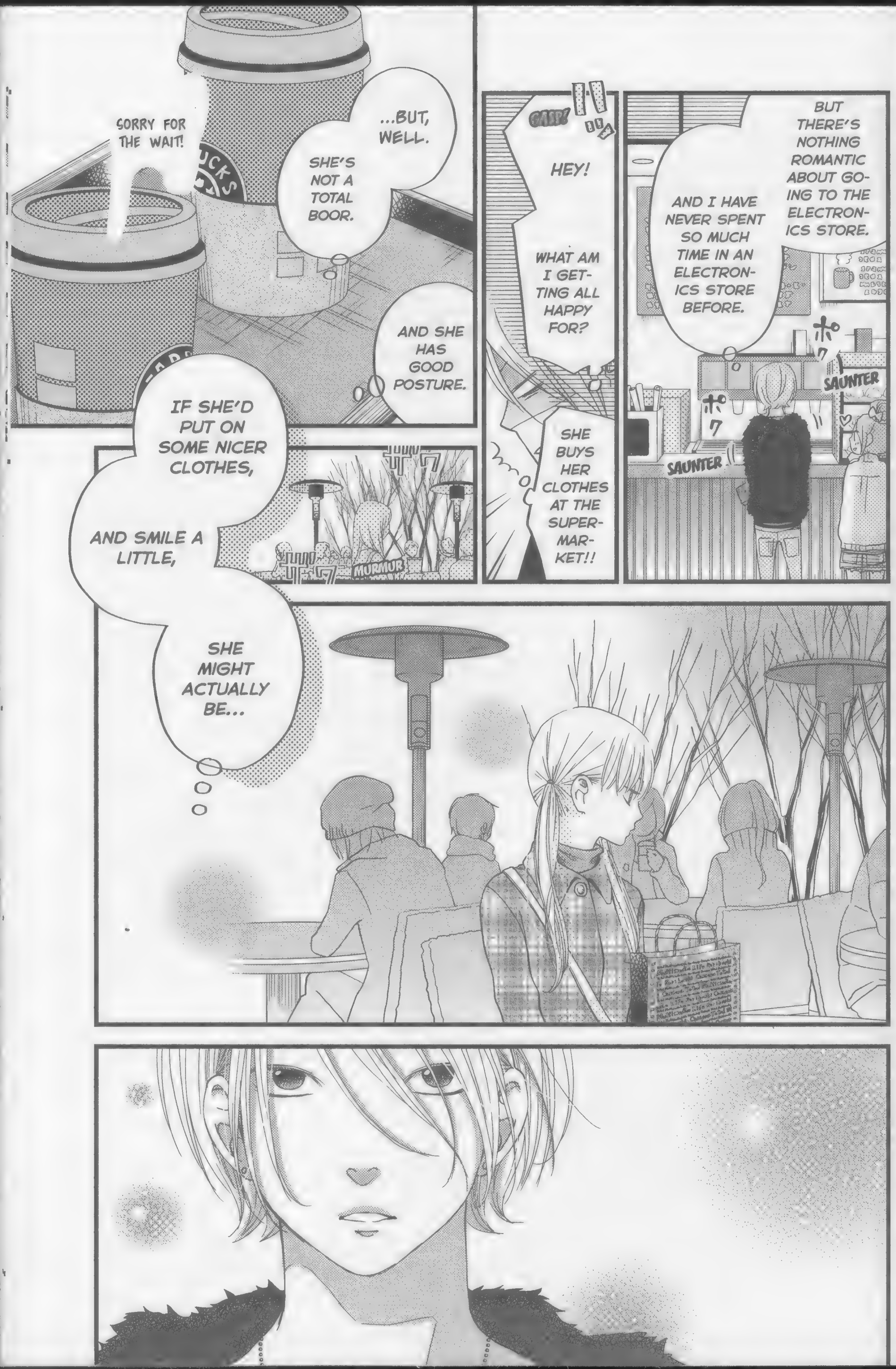

HMMM.
IF HE DID,
IT COULD BE A PROBLEM.
...ARE YOU OKAY, YAMAKEN-KUN?
YOU WERE REALLY PUSHING YOURSELF BACK THERE.
GASP
WHEEZE
ゼ
ゼ
REALLY CAN'T HANDLE YUZAN-SAN.
...LOOK, YOU.
IS YOUR HEAD ON STRAIGHT?
YOU CAN'T JUST JUMP IN A CAR WITH A GUY!!
WHAT? BUT HE SAID HE WOULD TELL ME ABOUT HARU.
WHAT'S THE POINT
IN HEARING ABOUT HIM FROM ANYONE BUT HIM?
ゼ
ゼ
GASP
WHEEZE

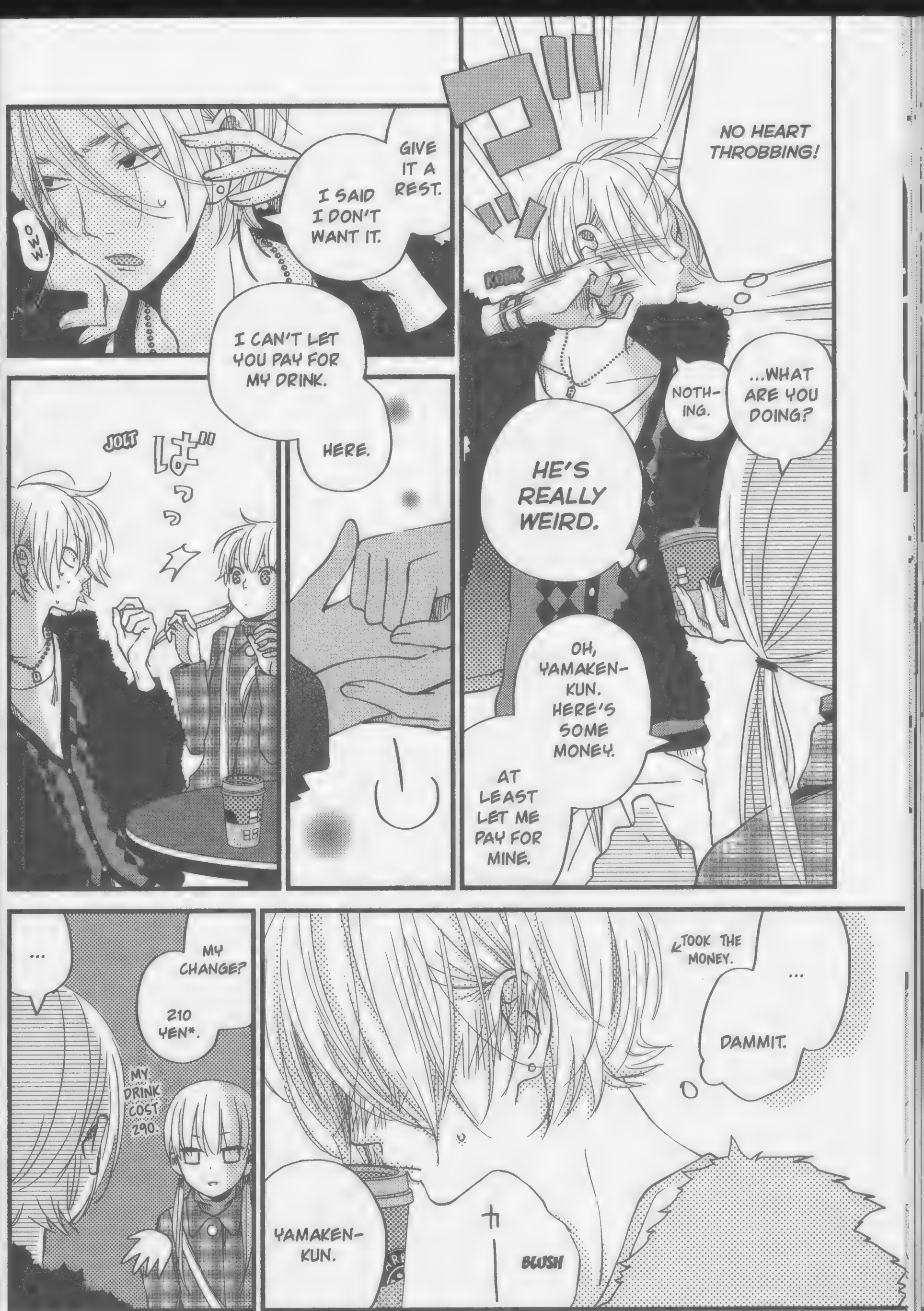

ARGH, I'M MAKING MYSELF SICK.
THIS IS ALL HER FAULT.
WALTZING INTO DANGER LIKE THAT!
HERE I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH
TO RUN
INTO
HER...
ゼ
WHEEZE
ゼ
GASP
ゼ
GASP
ゼ
GASP
WHEEZE
...LATER.
スタ
SKFF
スタ
SKFF
スタ
SKFF
HUH? YOU'RE ALREADY RECOVERED?
FOR YOUR INFORMATION, I WAS JUST BEING NICE.
NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS.
DON'T GET ANY WEIRD IDEAS.
?!
OKAY...I WON'T.
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP.
OH, RIGHT, YAMAKEN-KUN
WHAT?!


IF YOU DON'T, THAT'S FINE, BUT
DO YOU HAVE SOME TIME?
SURE,
I GUESS.
...BY THE WAY, WHERE DO YOU BUY YOUR CLOTHES?
THE SECOND FLOOR AT YAZAWAYA.
→ SUPERMARKET
YAMAKEN-KUN
IS RIGHT.
I DECIDED TO BE ASSERTIVE.
"I KNOW WHAT I WANT NOW."
I MADE MY DECISION.
I HAVE TO WORK FOR IT.
"WE CAN DO THIS.
HARU."

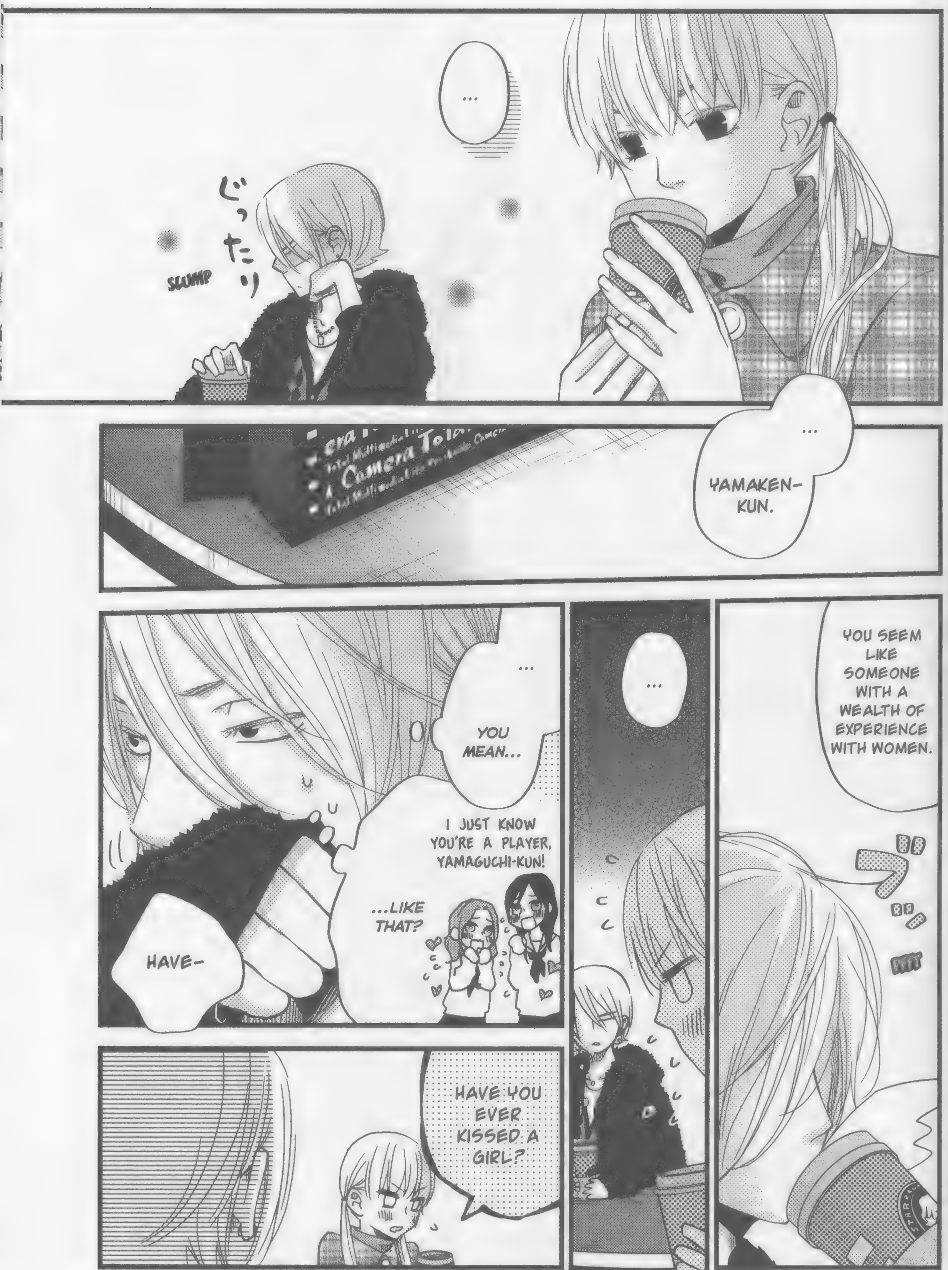

IF HE STILL TURNS HIS BACK ON ME AFTER THAT,
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.
ぶち
BWAH
...
?
GET OVER IT!
ザワ
MURMUR
ザワ
MURMUR
げっそり
BLAH

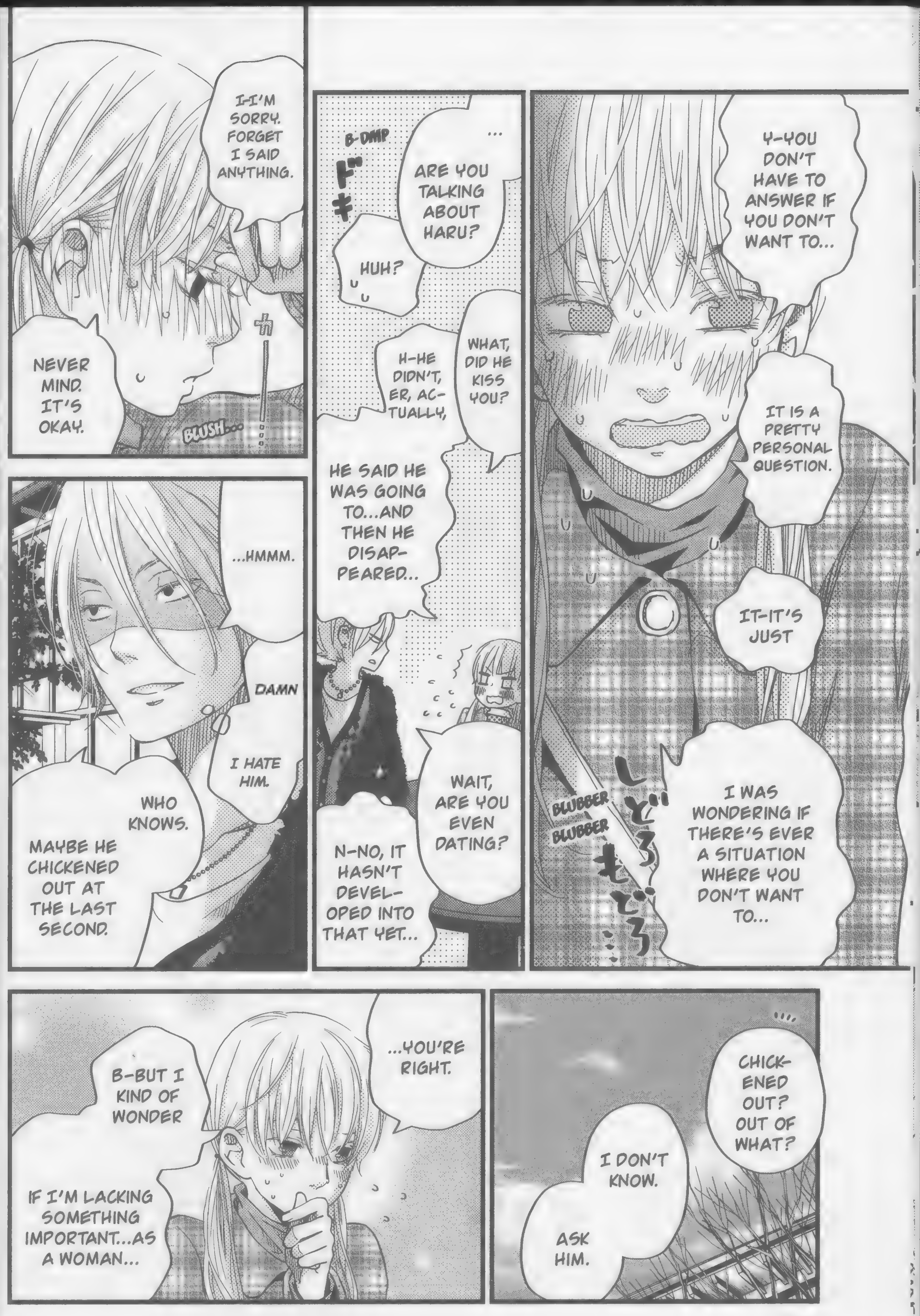

Camera Total
SUCCESSFULLY GOT OVER IT
TOUCHED...
THANK YOU, YAMAKEN-KUN.
I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON ADVICE FROM A FORMER DICTIONARY USER.
I HAVE NO REGRETS ABOUT THIS PURCHASE.
DAMN RIGHT YOU DON'T.
TAKING TWO FREAKING HOURS TO BUY A STUPID DICTIONARY.
AND AN OLD MODEL, NO LESS.
WELL WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? I HAVE THIS THING CALLED A BUDGET.
UNLIKE YOU.
GRR
CLATTER
I'M GONNA BUY US SOME DRINKS.
OH RE-ALLY.
YOU LIKE YOURS HOT, RIGHT?
OH, WAIT. I'LL GET THEM.
I OWE YOU FOR COMING WITH ME.
NO THANKS.
NO WAY A WOMAN'S GONNA BUY ME A DRINK.
YOU CAN PICK UP YOUR DRINKS UNDER THAT LAMP.
IS IT ME...
OR IS THIS KIND OF LIKE A DATE?

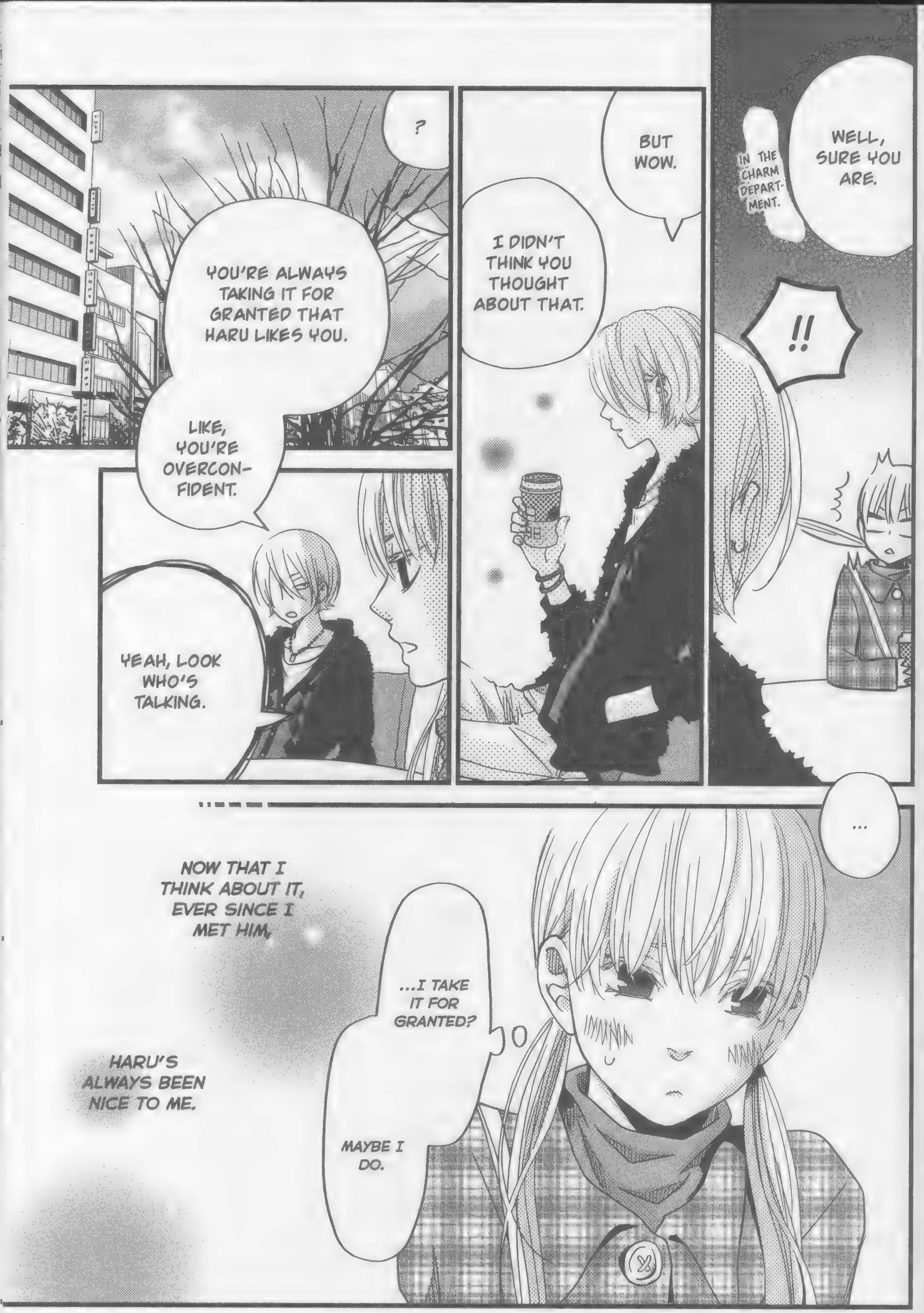

BUT THERE'S NOTHING ROMANTIC ABOUT GOING TO THE ELECTRONICS STORE.
AND I HAVE NEVER SPENT SO MUCH TIME IN AN ELECTRONICS STORE BEFORE.
SAUNTER
SAUNTER
GASP!
HEY!
WHAT AM I GETTING ALL HAPPY FOR?
SHE BUYS HER CLOTHES AT THE SUPERMARKET!!
SORRY FOR THE WAIT!
...BUT, WELL.
SHE'S NOT A TOTAL BOOR.
AND SHE HAS GOOD POSTURE.
MURMUR
IF SHE'D PUT ON SOME NICER CLOTHES,
AND SMILE A LITTLE,
SHE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE...

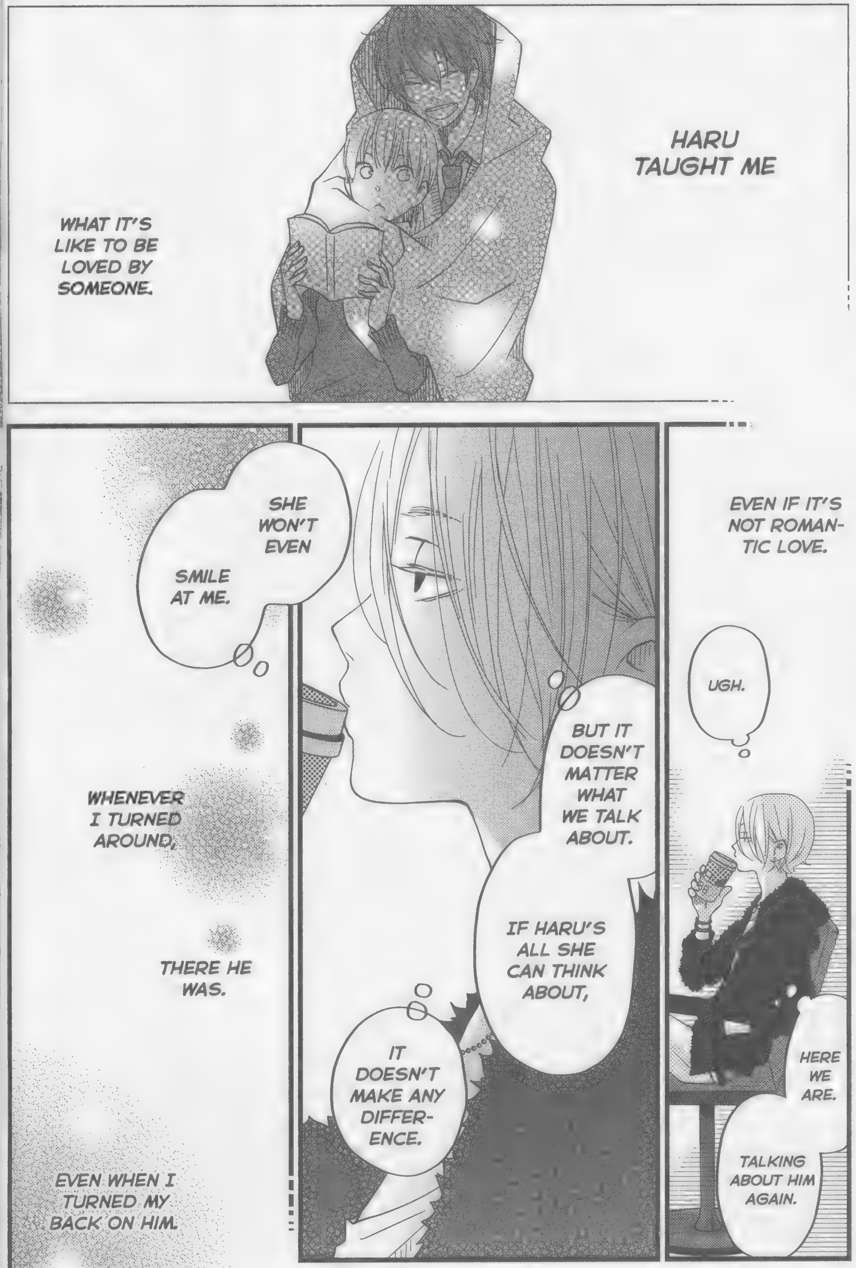

NO HEART THROBBING!
KONK
...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
NOTHING.
HE'S REALLY WEIRD.
OH, YAMAKEN-KUN. HERE'S SOME MONEY.
AT LEAST LET ME PAY FOR MINE.
GIVE IT A REST.
I SAID I DON'T WANT IT.
OWW.
I CAN'T LET YOU PAY FOR MY DRINK.
HERE.
JOLT
ばっ
TOOK THE MONEY.
...
DAMMIT.
カー
BLUSH
YAMAKEN-KUN.
MY CHANGE?
210 YEN*.
MY DRINK COST 290.
...

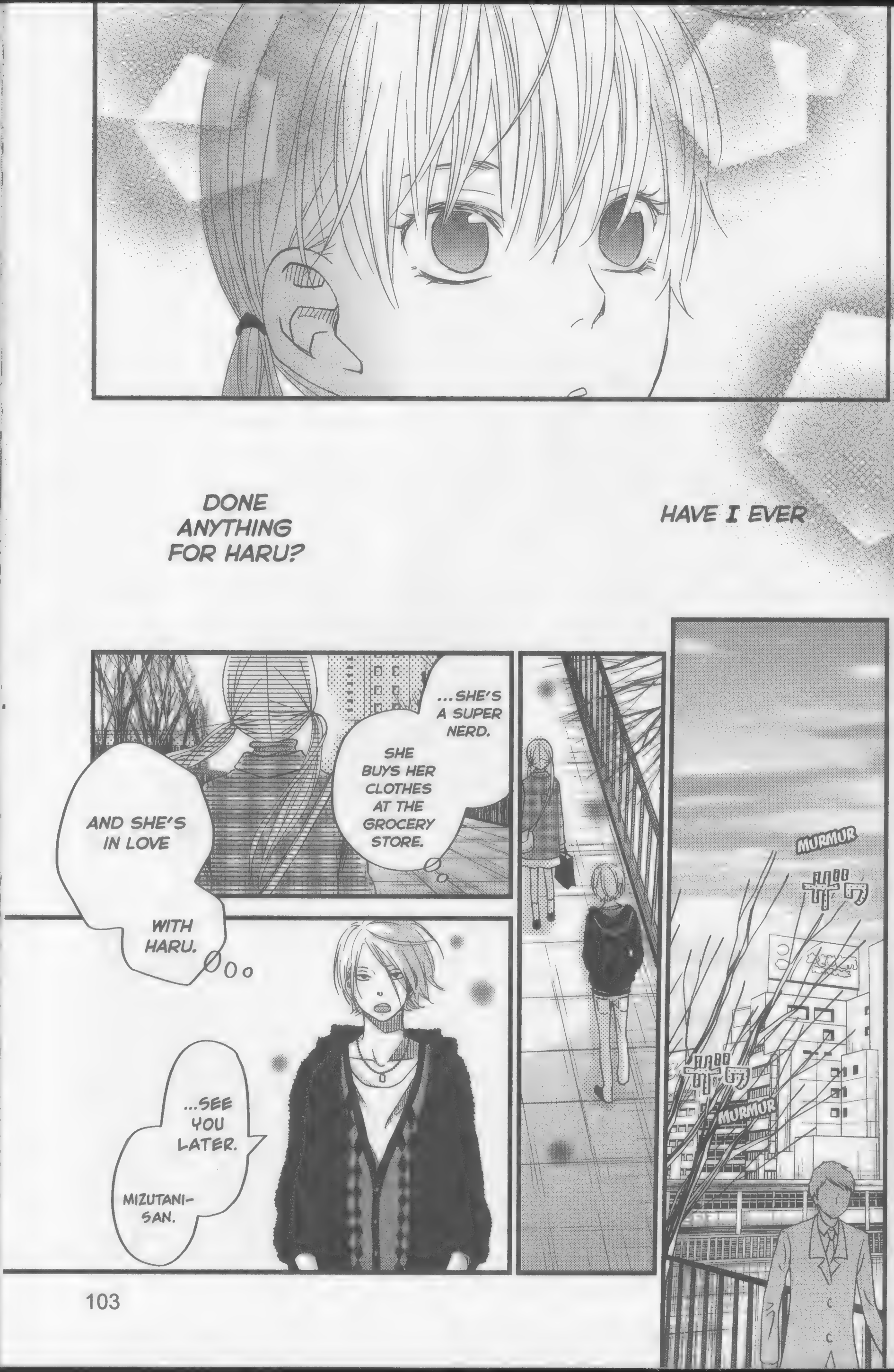
*About $2.10

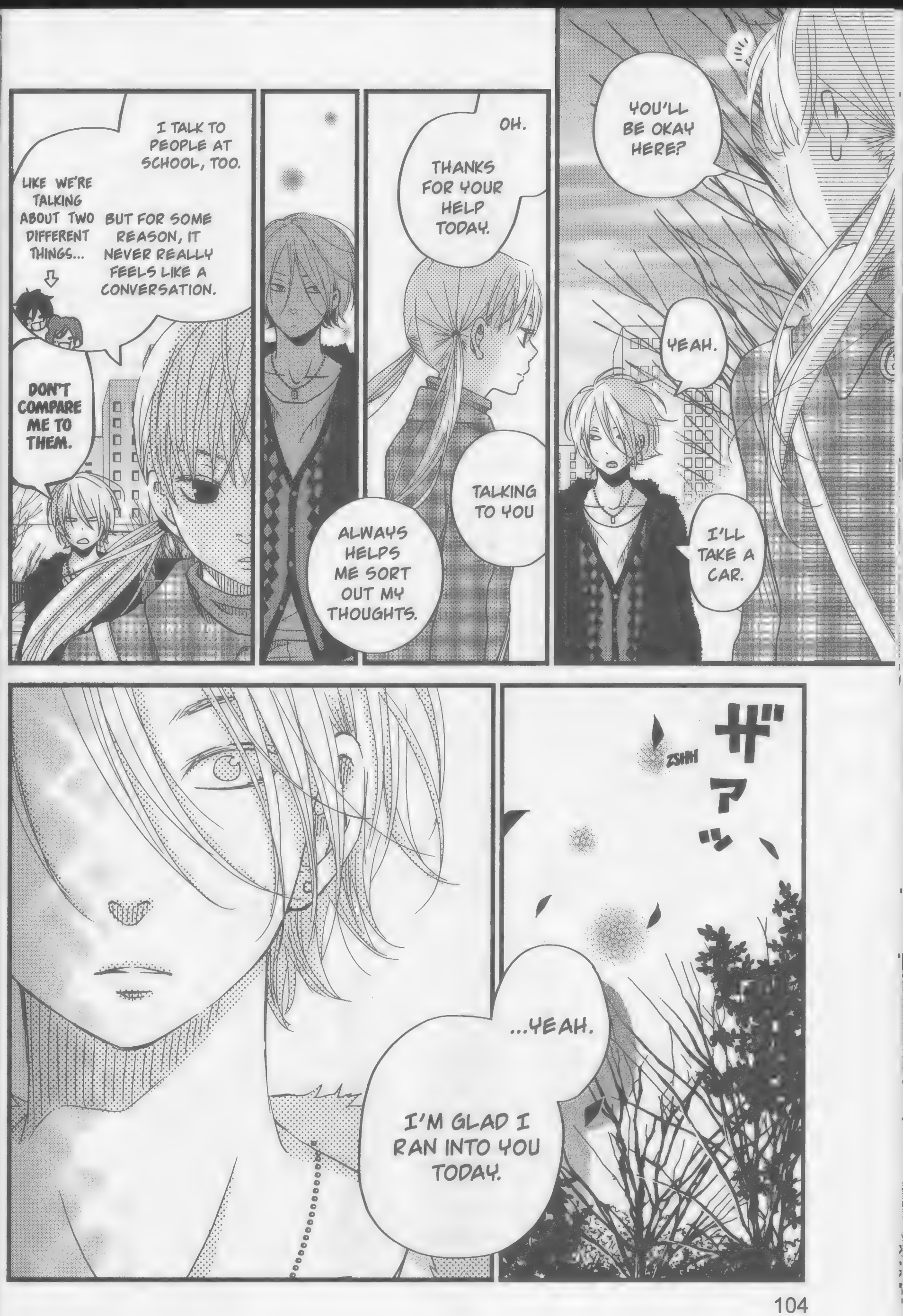

...
じったり
SLUMP
...
YAMAKEN-KUN.
YOU SEEM LIKE SOMEONE WITH A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE WITH WOMEN.
ブッ
FFT
...
...
YOU MEAN...
I JUST KNOW YOU'RE A PLAYER, YAMAGUCHI-KUN!
...LIKE THAT?
HAVE-
HAVE YOU EVER KISSED A GIRL?

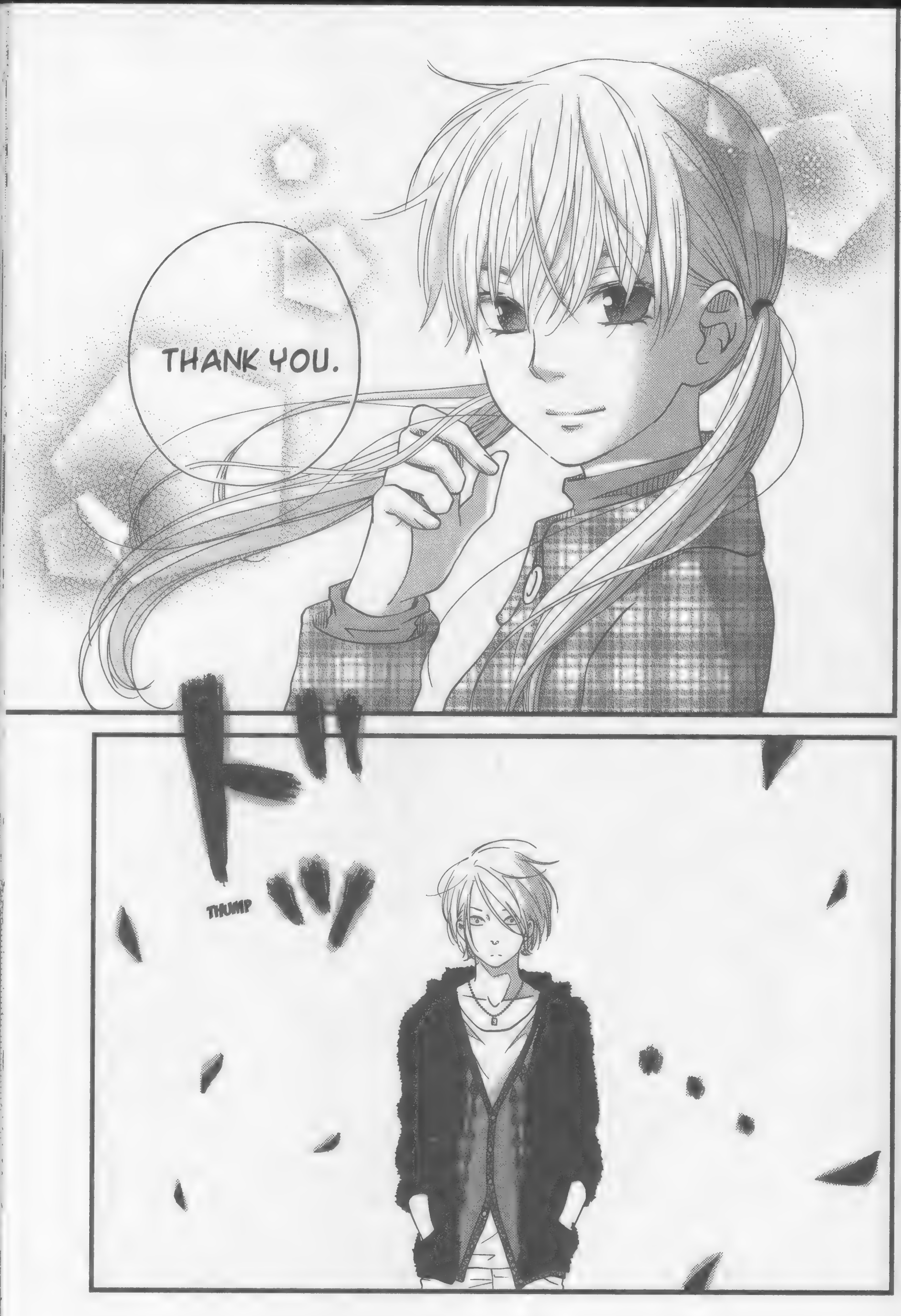

Y-YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER IF YOU DON'T WANT TO...
IT IS A PRETTY PERSONAL QUESTION.
IT-IT'S JUST
I WAS WONDERING IF THERE'S EVER A SITUATION WHERE YOU DON'T WANT TO...
BLUBBER BLUBBER
しどろもどろ
...
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT HARU?
B-DMP
ドキ
HUH?
WHAT, DID HE KISS YOU?
H-HE DIDN'T, ER, ACTUALLY,
HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO...AND THEN HE DISAPPEARED...
WAIT, ARE YOU EVEN DATING?
N-NO, IT HASN'T DEVELOPED INTO THAT YET...
I-I'M SORRY. FORGET I SAID ANYTHING.
NEVER MIND. IT'S OKAY.
カ
BLUSH...
...HMMM.
DAMN
I HATE HIM.
WHO KNOWS.
MAYBE HE CHICKENED OUT AT THE LAST SECOND.
...
CHICKENED OUT? OUT OF WHAT?
I DON'T KNOW.
ASK HIM.
...YOU'RE RIGHT.
B-BUT I KIND OF WONDER
IF I'M LACKING SOMETHING IMPORTANT...AS A WOMAN...

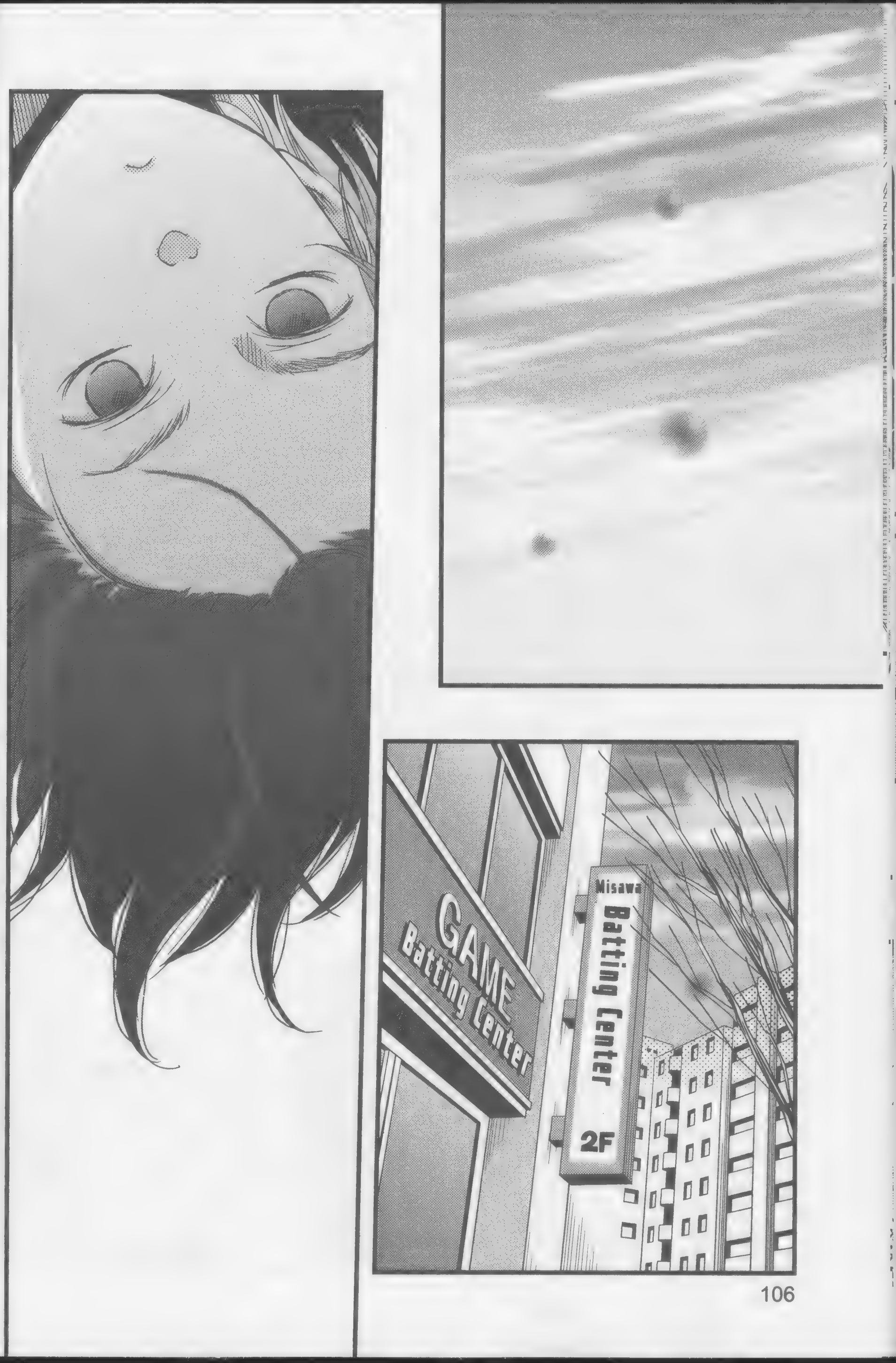

WELL, SURE YOU ARE.
IN THE CHARM DEPARTMENT.
!!
BUT WOW.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THAT.
?
YOU'RE ALWAYS TAKING IT FOR GRANTED THAT HARU LIKES YOU.
LIKE, YOU'RE OVERCONFIDENT.
YEAH, LOOK WHO'S TALKING.
...
...I TAKE IT FOR GRANTED?
MAYBE I DO.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, EVER SINCE I MET HIM,
HARU'S ALWAYS BEEN NICE TO ME.

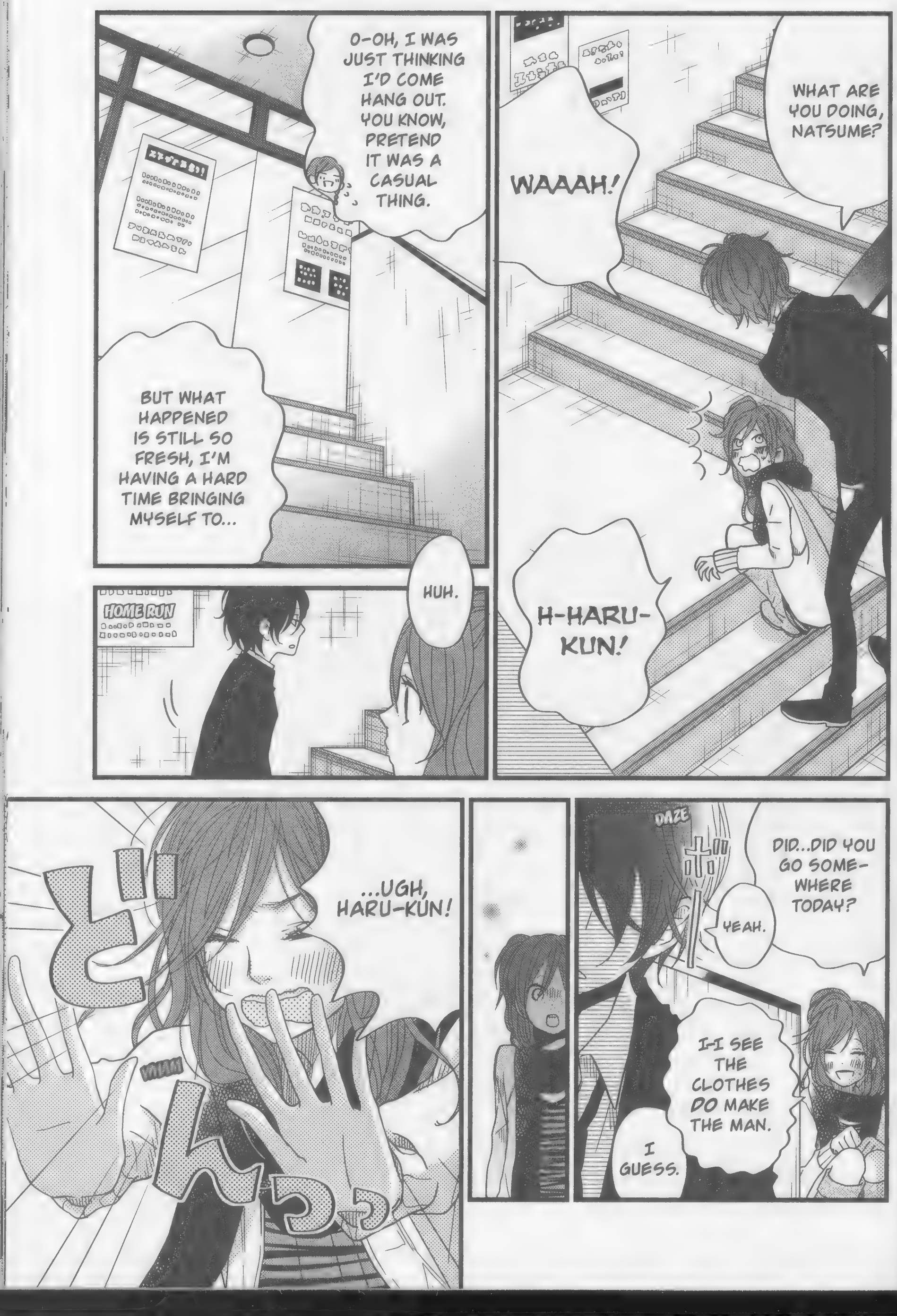

HARU TAUGHT ME
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE LOVED BY SOMEONE.
EVEN IF IT'S NOT ROMANTIC LOVE.
UGH.
HERE WE ARE.
TALKING ABOUT HIM AGAIN.
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT WE TALK ABOUT.
IF HARU'S ALL SHE CAN THINK ABOUT,
IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.
SHE WON'T EVEN SMILE AT ME.
WHENEVER I TURNED AROUND,
THERE HE WAS.
EVEN WHEN I TURNED MY BACK ON HIM.

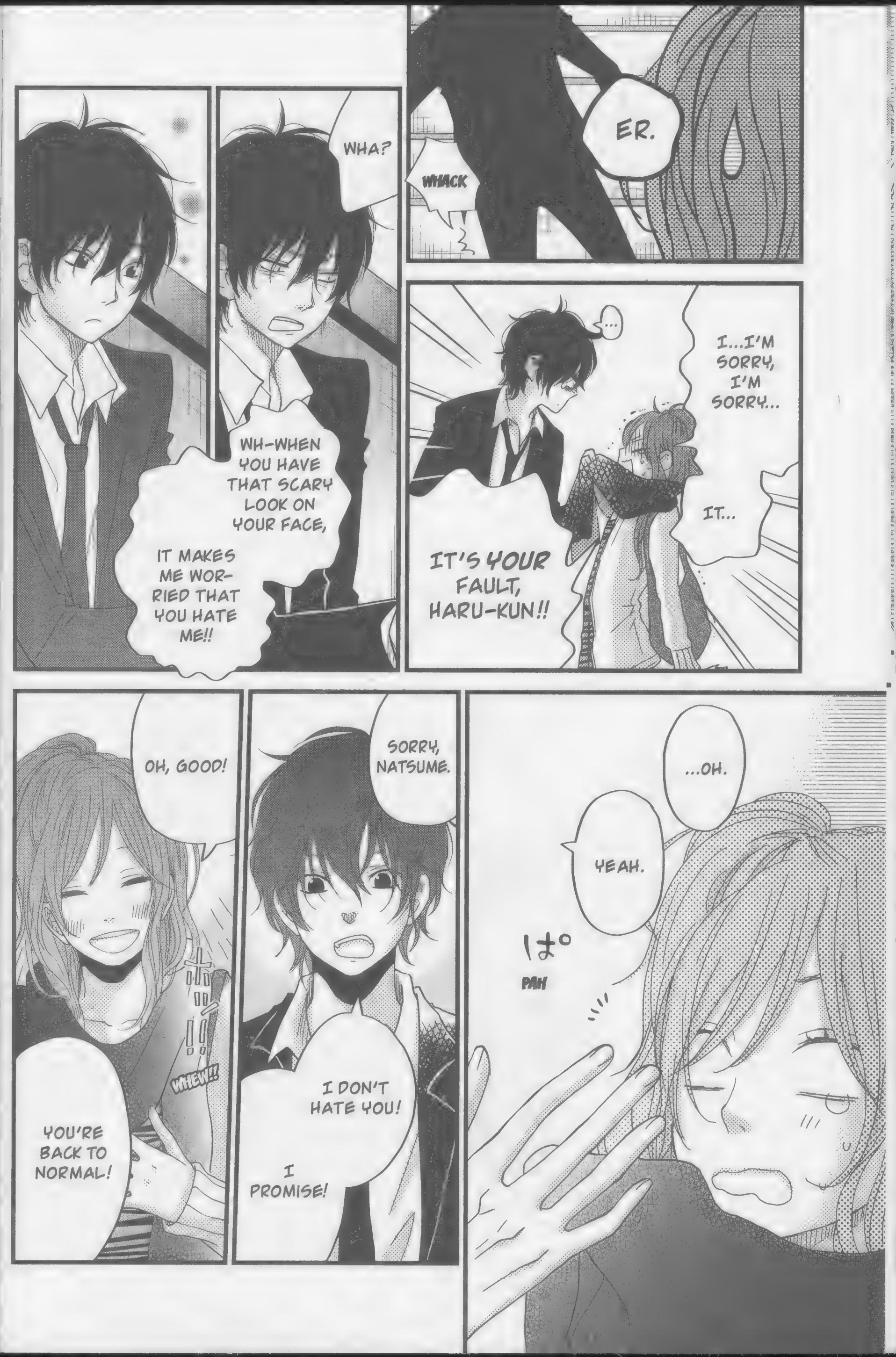

HAVE I EVER
DONE ANYTHING FOR HARU?
MURMUR
MURMUR
...SHE'S A SUPER NERD.
SHE BUYS HER CLOTHES AT THE GROCERY STORE.
AND SHE'S IN LOVE WITH HARU.
...SEE YOU LATER.
MIZUTANI-SAN.

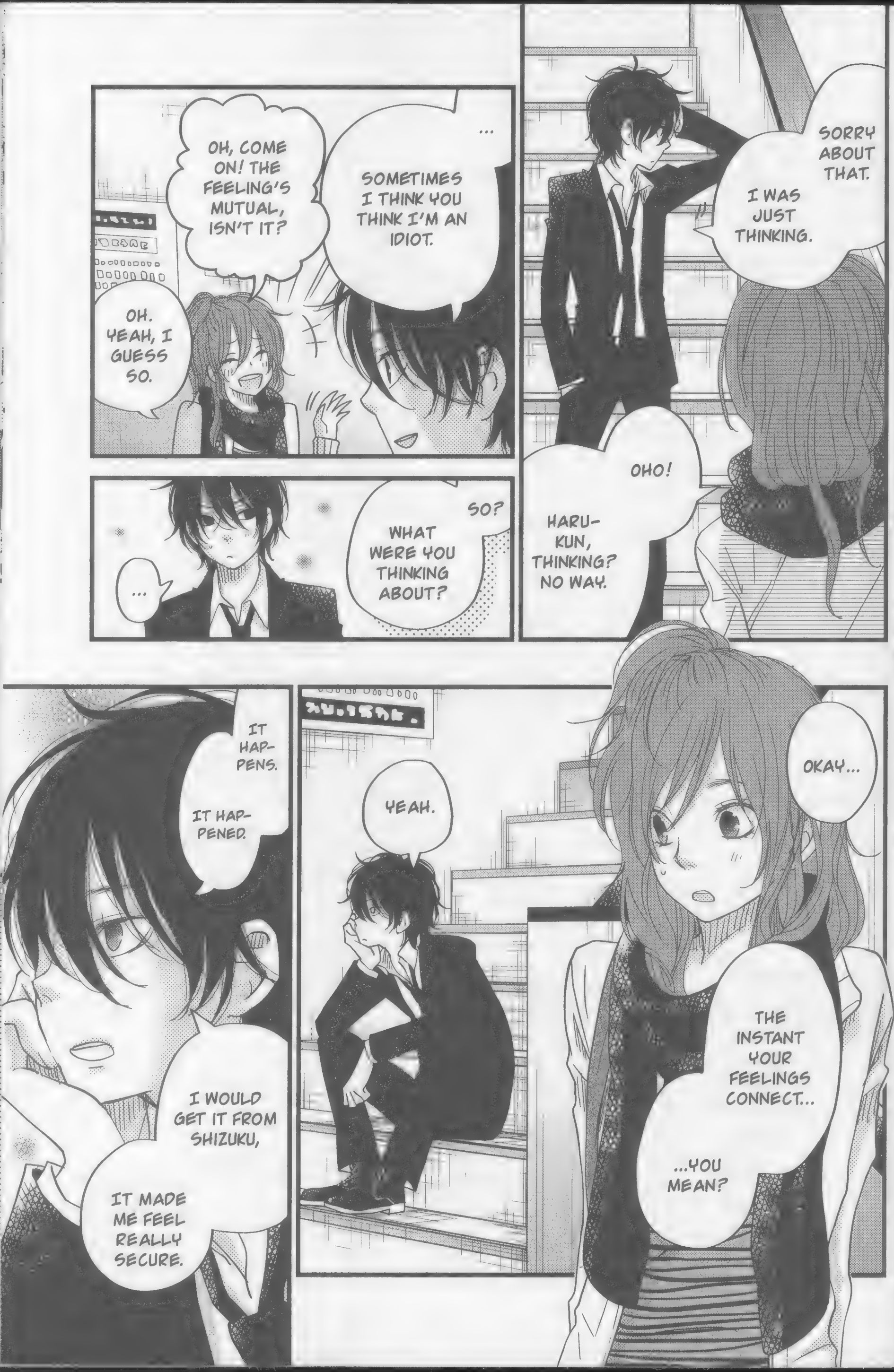

YOU'LL BE OKAY HERE?
YEAH.
I'LL TAKE A CAR.
OH.
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP TODAY.
TALKING TO YOU
ALWAYS HELPS ME SORT OUT MY THOUGHTS.
I TALK TO PEOPLE AT SCHOOL, TOO.
BUT FOR SOME REASON, IT NEVER REALLY FEELS LIKE A CONVERSATION.
LIKE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TWO DIFFERENT THINGS...
DON'T COMPARE ME TO THEM.
ザアッ、
ZSHH
...YEAH.
I'M GLAD I RAN INTO YOU TODAY.

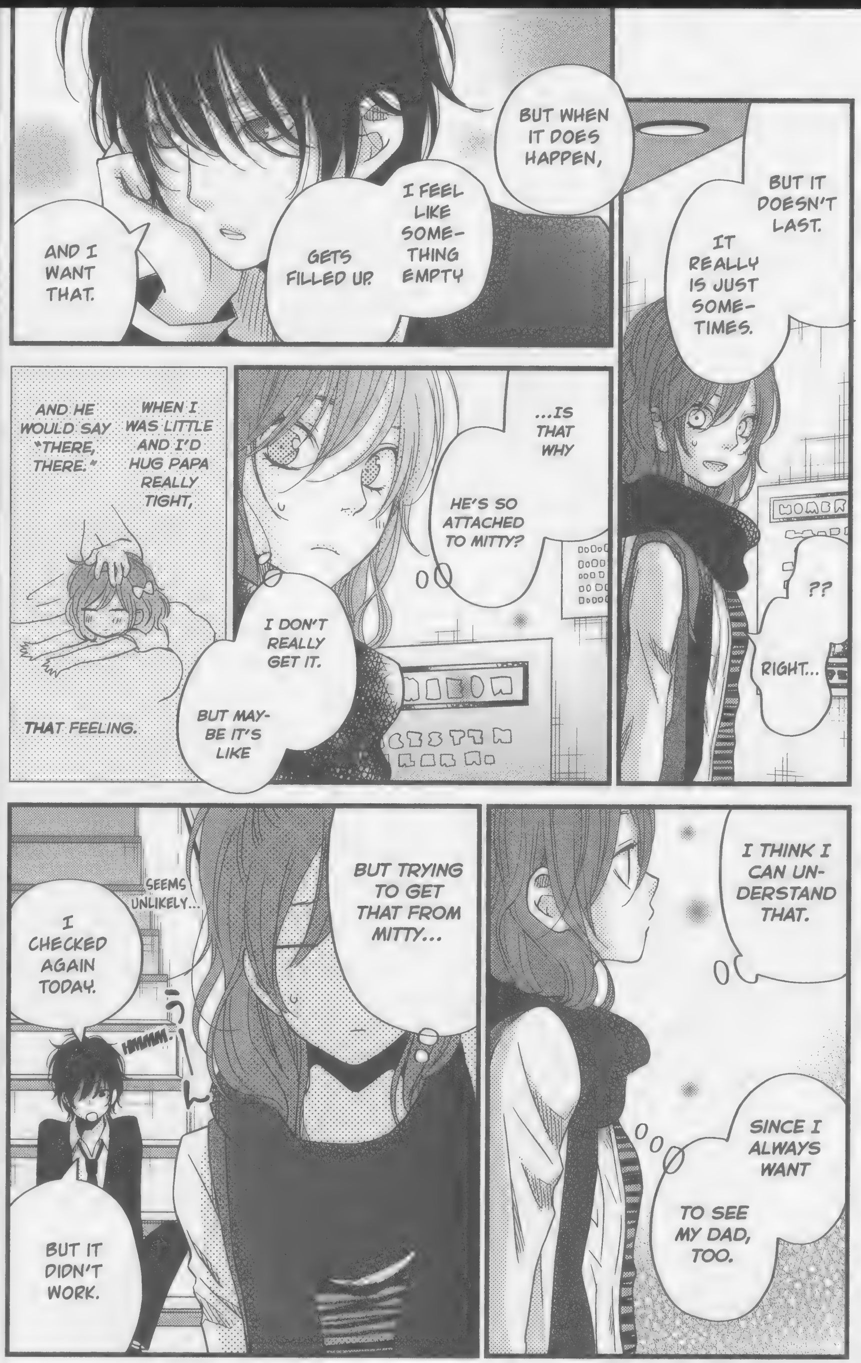

THANK YOU.
ドッ
THUMP

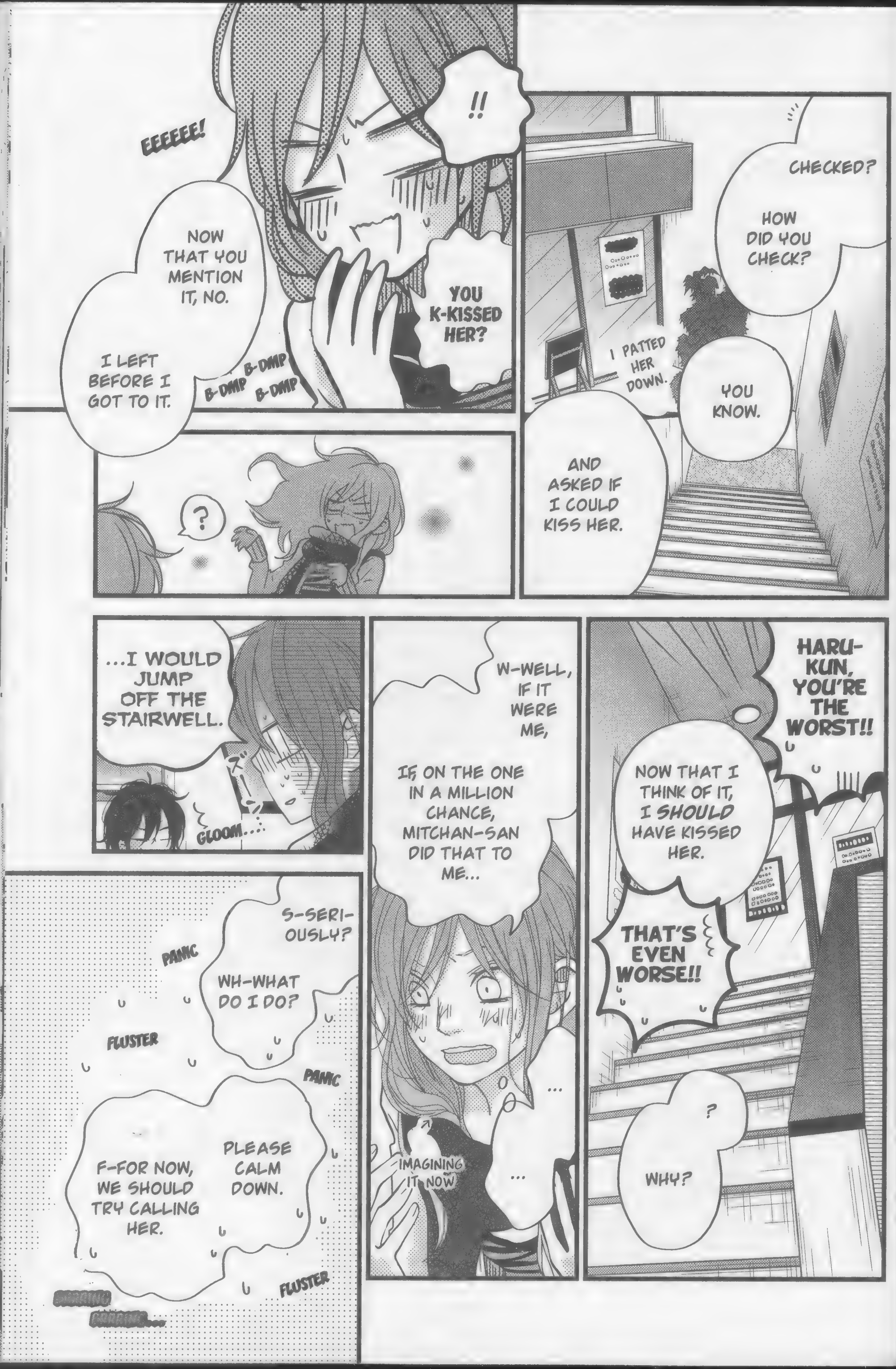

Misawa
Batting Center
2F
GAME
Batting Center

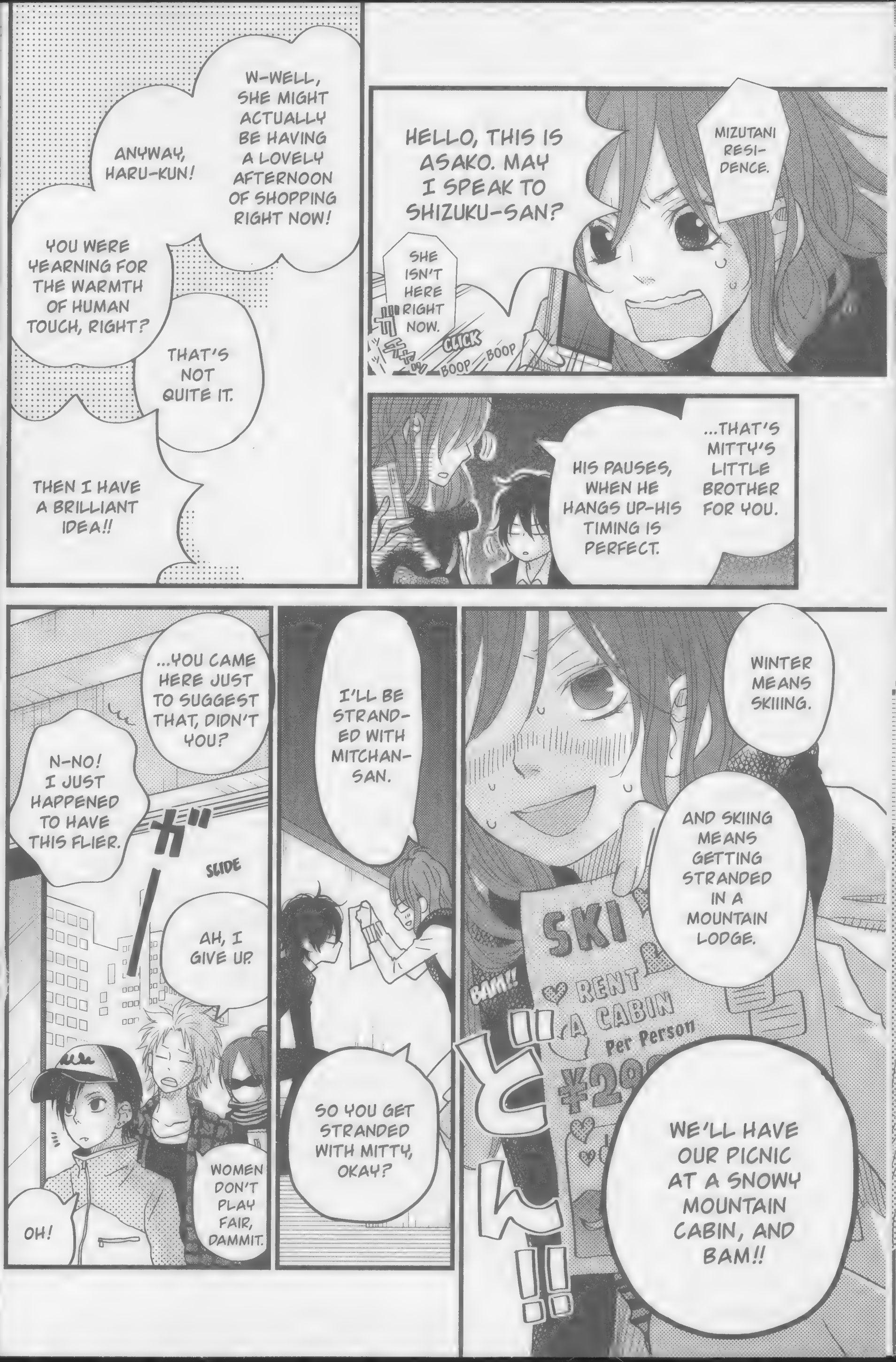

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, NATSUME?
WAAAH!
H-HARU-KUN!
O-OH, I WAS JUST THINKING I'D COME HANG OUT. YOU KNOW, PRETEND IT WAS A CASUAL THING.
BUT WHAT HAPPENED IS STILL SO FRESH, I'M HAVING A HARD TIME BRINGING MYSELF TO...
HUH.
HOME RUN
DAZE
DID...DID YOU GO SOMEWHERE TODAY?
YEAH.
I-I SEE THE CLOTHES DO MAKE THE MAN.
I GUESS.
...UGH, HARU-KUN!
どーんっっ

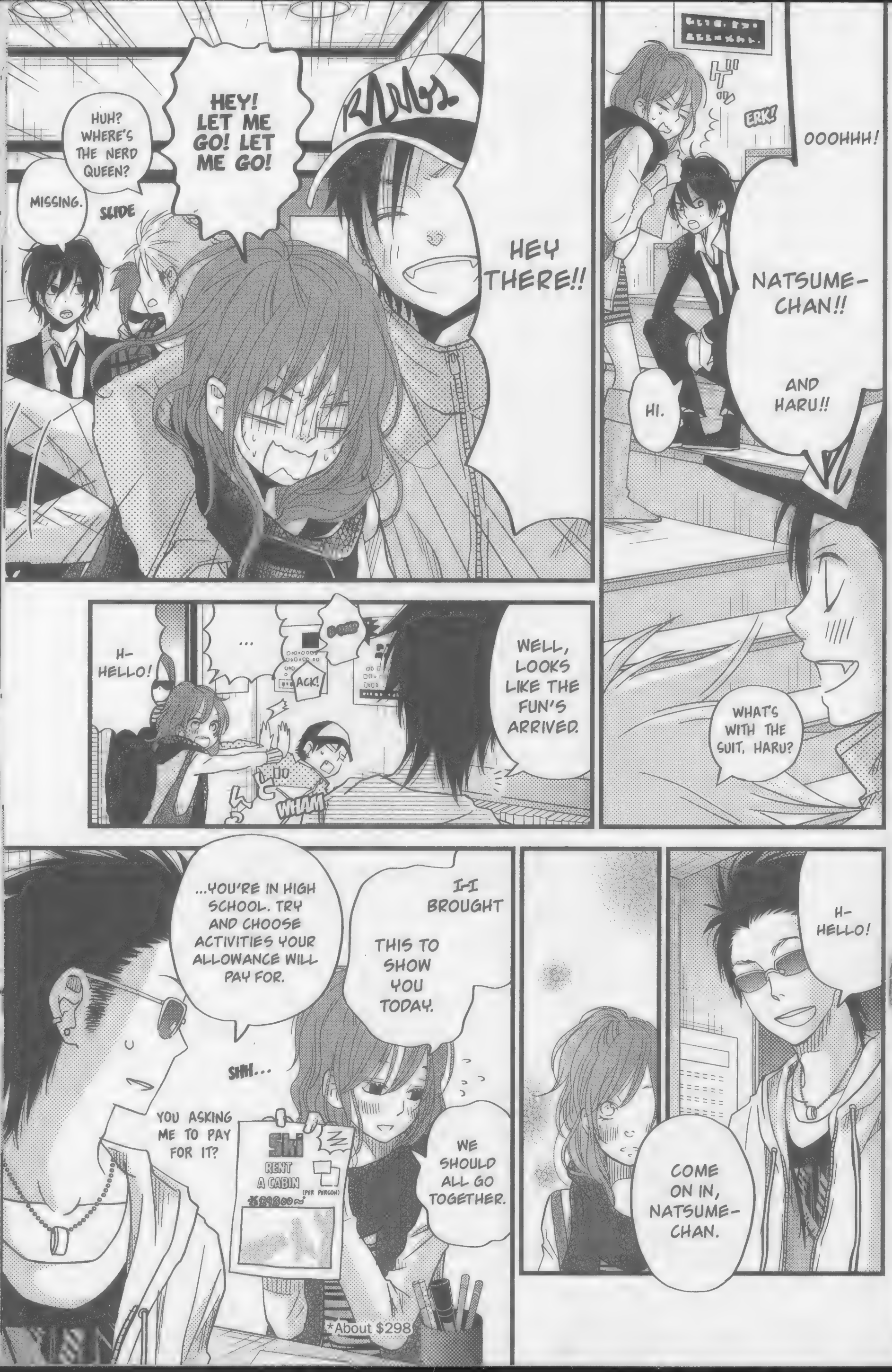

ER.
WHACK
…
I…I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY…
IT…
IT'S YOUR FAULT, HARU-KUN!!
WHA?
WH-WHEN YOU HAVE THAT SCARY LOOK ON YOUR FACE,
IT MAKES ME WORRIED THAT YOU HATE ME!!
…OH.
YEAH.
ぱ
PAH
SORRY, NATSUME.
I DON'T HATE YOU!
I PROMISE!
OH, GOOD!
YOU'RE BACK TO NORMAL!
WHEW!!


SORRY ABOUT THAT.
I WAS JUST THINKING.
OHO!
HARU-KUN, THINKING? NO WAY.
…
SOMETIMES I THINK YOU THINK I'M AN IDIOT.
OH, COME ON! THE FEELING'S MUTUAL, ISN'T IT?
OH. YEAH, I GUESS SO.
SO?
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
…
IT HAPPENS.
IT HAPPENED.
I WOULD GET IT FROM SHIZUKU,
IT MADE ME FEEL REALLY SECURE.
OKAY…
THE INSTANT YOUR FEELINGS CONNECT…
…YOU MEAN?
YEAH.

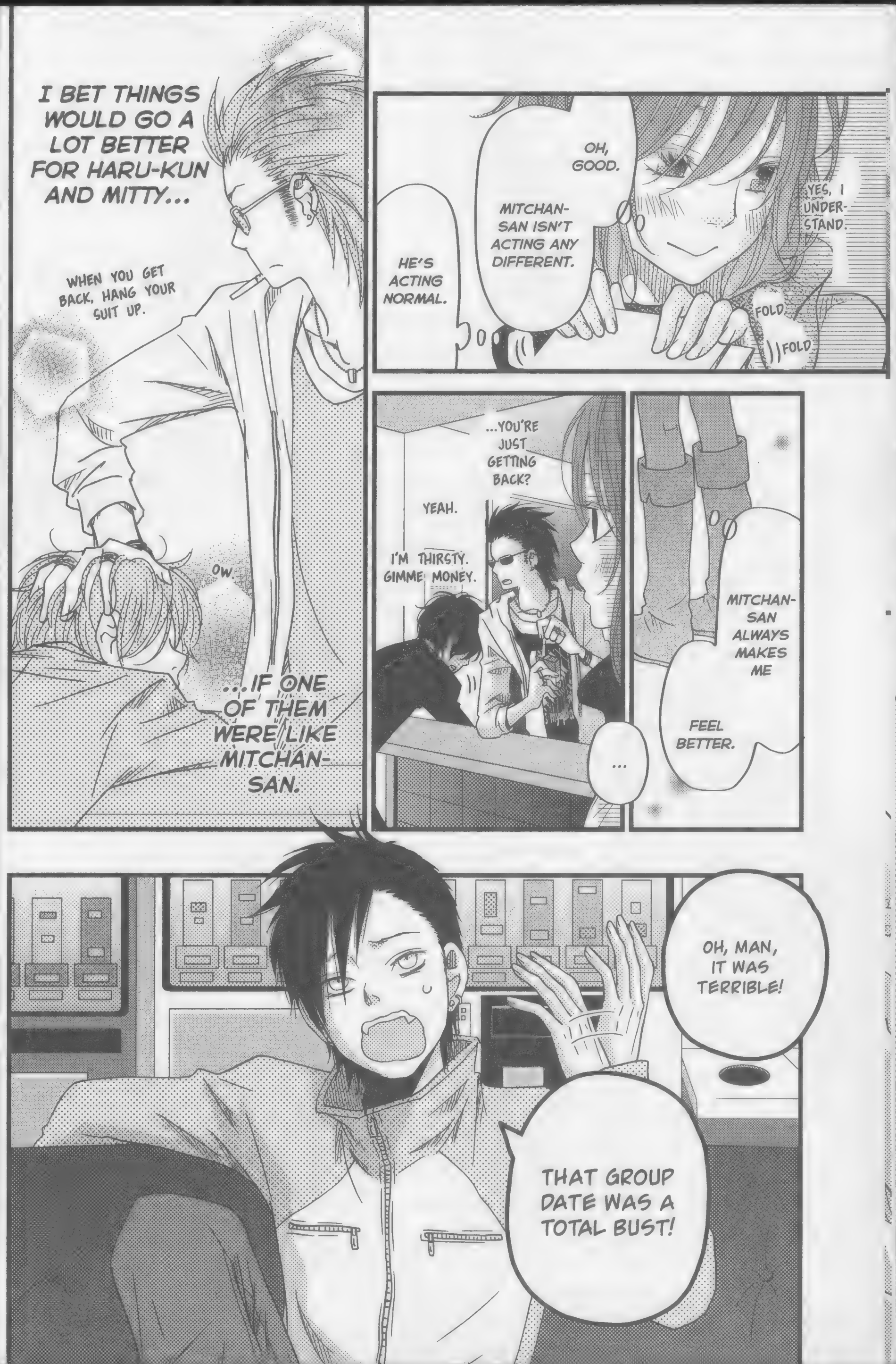

BUT IT DOESN'T LAST.
IT REALLY IS JUST SOME-TIMES.
BUT WHEN IT DOES HAPPEN,
I FEEL LIKE SOME-THING EMPTY GETS FILLED UP.
AND I WANT THAT.
??
RIGHT...
...IS THAT WHY HE'S SO ATTACHED TO MITTY?
I DON'T REALLY GET IT.
BUT MAY-BE IT'S LIKE
WHEN I WAS LITTLE AND I'D HUG PAPA REALLY TIGHT,
AND HE WOULD SAY "THERE, THERE."
THAT FEELING.
I THINK I CAN UN-DERSTAND THAT.
SINCE I ALWAYS WANT TO SEE MY DAD, TOO.
BUT TRYING TO GET THAT FROM MITTY...
SEEMS UNLIKELY...
I CHECKED AGAIN TODAY.
HMMMM.
BUT IT DIDN'T WORK.

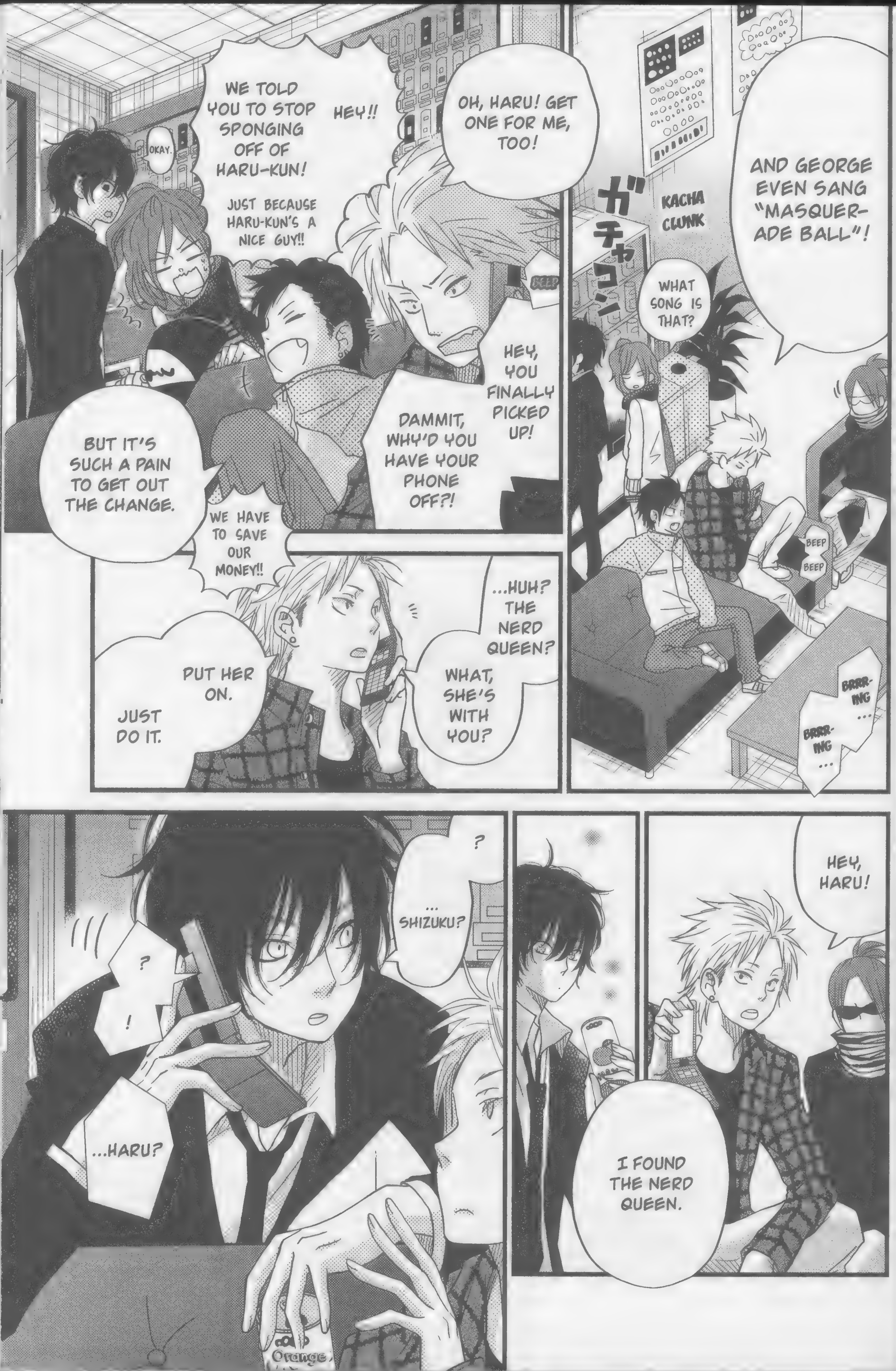

CHECKED?
HOW DID YOU CHECK?
I PATTED HER DOWN.
YOU KNOW.
AND ASKED IF I COULD KISS HER.
!!
EEEEEE!
YOU K-KISSED HER?
B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, NO.
I LEFT BEFORE I GOT TO IT.
?
HARU-KUN, YOU'RE THE WORST!!
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, I SHOULD HAVE KISSED HER.
THAT'S EVEN WORSE!!
?
WHY?
W-WELL, IF IT WERE ME,
IF, ON THE ONE IN A MILLION CHANCE, MITCHAN-SAN DID THAT TO ME...
...
IMAGINING IT NOW
...
...I WOULD JUMP OFF THE STAIRWELL.
GLOOM...
S-SERI-OUSLY?
PANIC
WH-WHAT DO I DO?
FLUSTER
PANIC
PLEASE CALM DOWN.
F-FOR NOW, WE SHOULD TRY CALLING HER.
FLUSTER
BRRRING BRRRING...

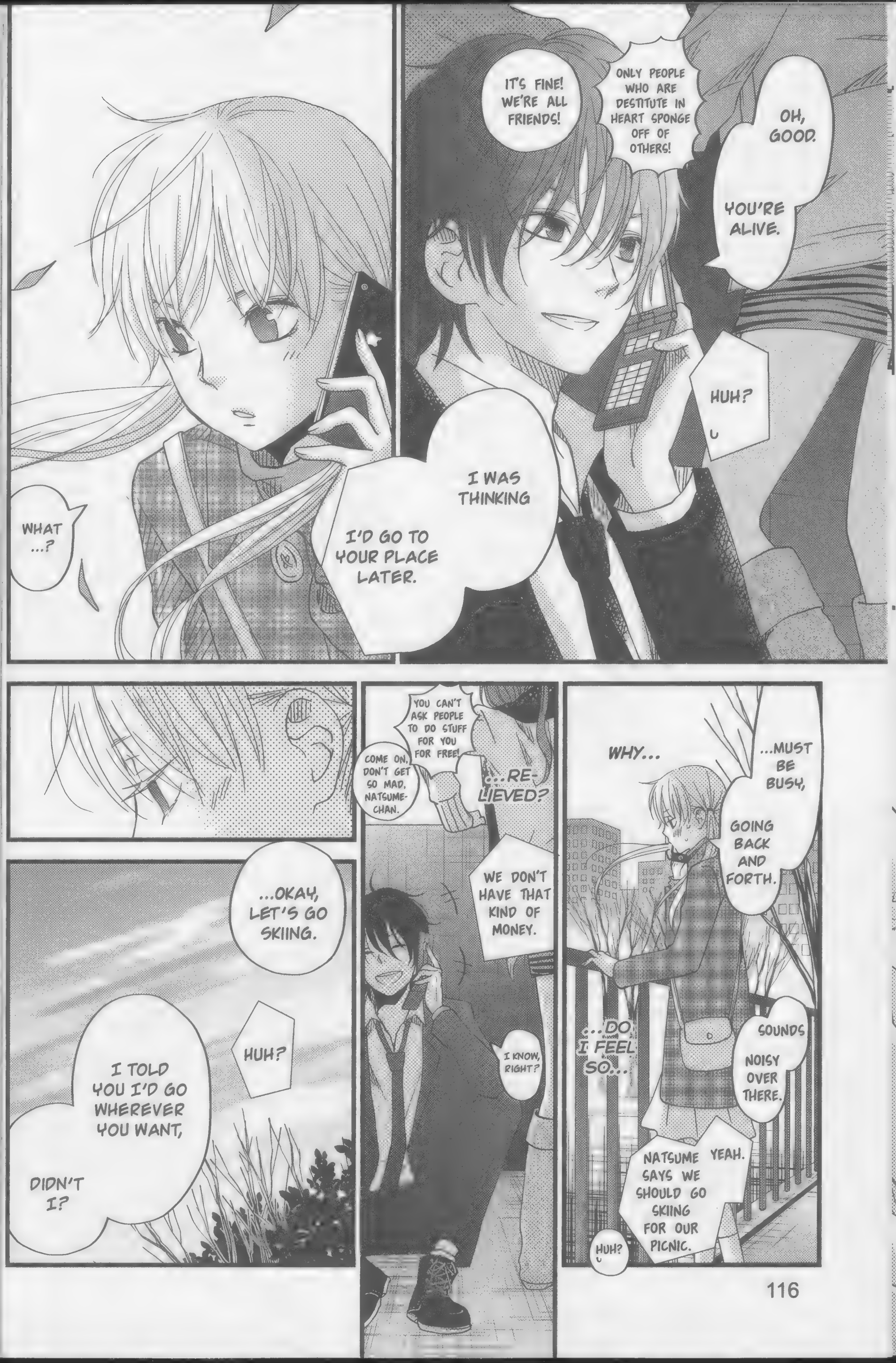

MIZUTANI RESIDENCE.
HELLO, THIS IS ASAKO. MAY I SPEAK TO SHIZUKU-SAN?
SHE ISN'T HERE RIGHT NOW.
CLICK
BOOP
BOOP
...THAT'S MITTY'S LITTLE BROTHER FOR YOU.
HIS PAUSES, WHEN HE HANGS UP—HIS TIMING IS PERFECT.
W-WELL, SHE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE HAVING A LOVELY AFTERNOON OF SHOPPING RIGHT NOW!
ANYWAY, HARU-KUN!
YOU WERE YEARNING FOR THE WARMTH OF HUMAN TOUCH, RIGHT?
THAT'S NOT QUITE IT.
THEN I HAVE A BRILLIANT IDEA!!
WINTER MEANS SKIIING.
AND SKIING MEANS GETTING STRANDED IN A MOUNTAIN LODGE.
SKI
RENT A CABIN
Per Person
¥29
BAM!!
WE'LL HAVE OUR PICNIC AT A SNOWY MOUNTAIN CABIN, AND BAM!!
どーん!!
I'LL BE STRANDED WITH MITCHAN-SAN.
SO YOU GET STRANDED WITH MITTY, OKAY?
...YOU CAME HERE JUST TO SUGGEST THAT, DIDN'T YOU?
N-NO! I JUST HAPPENED TO HAVE THIS FLIER.
ガ
SLIDE
AH, I GIVE UP.
WOMEN DON'T PLAY FAIR, DAMMIT.
OH!

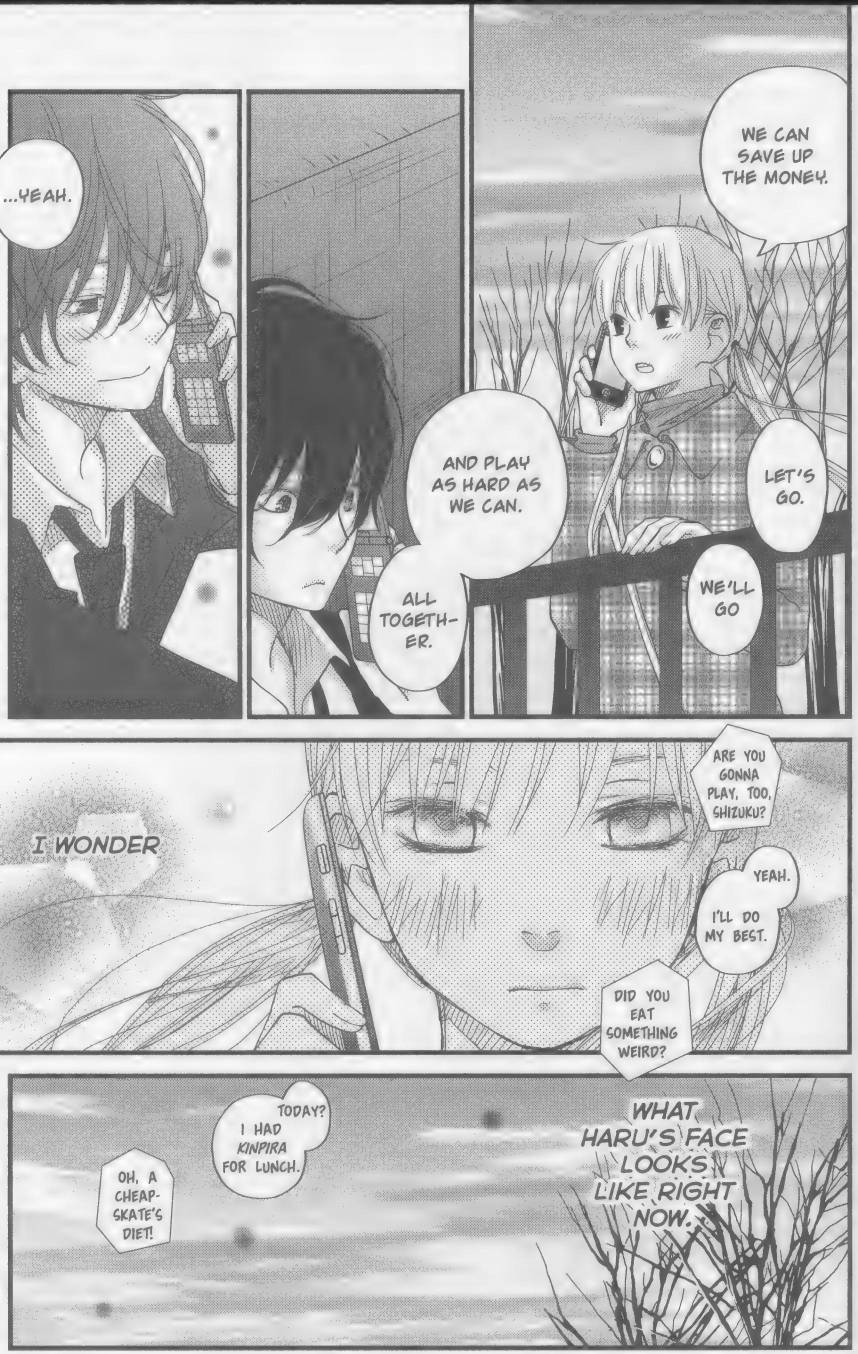

OOOHHH!
NATSUME-CHAN!!
AND HARU!!
ERK!
ゲッ
HI.
HEY THERE!!
HEY! LET ME GO! LET ME GO!
HUH? WHERE'S THE NERD QUEEN?
MISSING.
SLIDE
WHAT'S WITH THE SUIT, HARU?
WELL, LOOKS LIKE THE FUN'S ARRIVED.
...
H-HELLO!
ACK!
WHAM
H-HELLO!
COME ON IN, NATSUME-CHAN.
I-I BROUGHT THIS TO SHOW YOU TODAY.
WE SHOULD ALL GO TOGETHER.
...YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL. TRY AND CHOOSE ACTIVITIES YOUR ALLOWANCE WILL PAY FOR.
SHH...
YOU ASKING ME TO PAY FOR IT?
Ski
RENT A CABIN
¥29,800~
(PER PERSON)

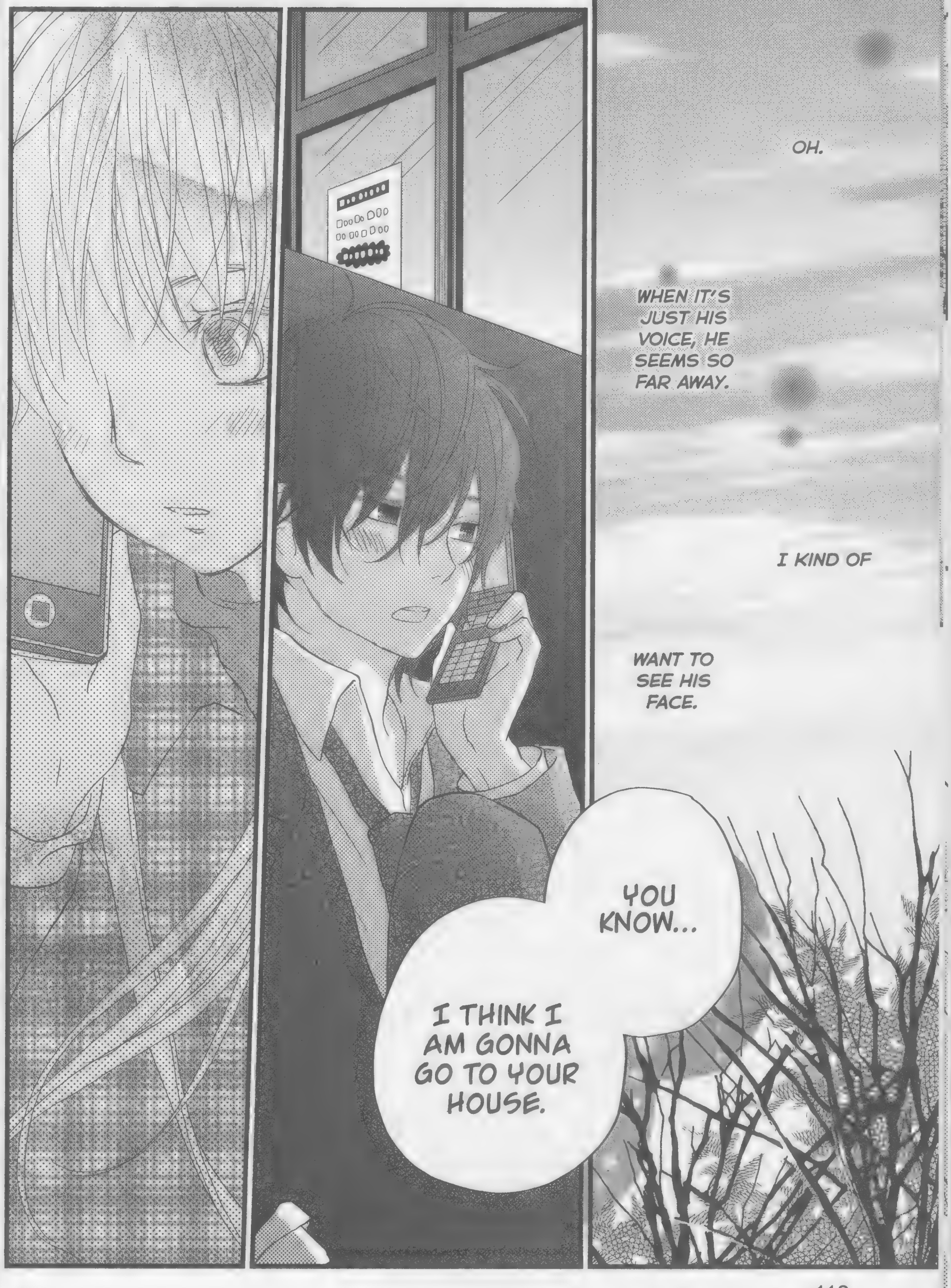
*About $298

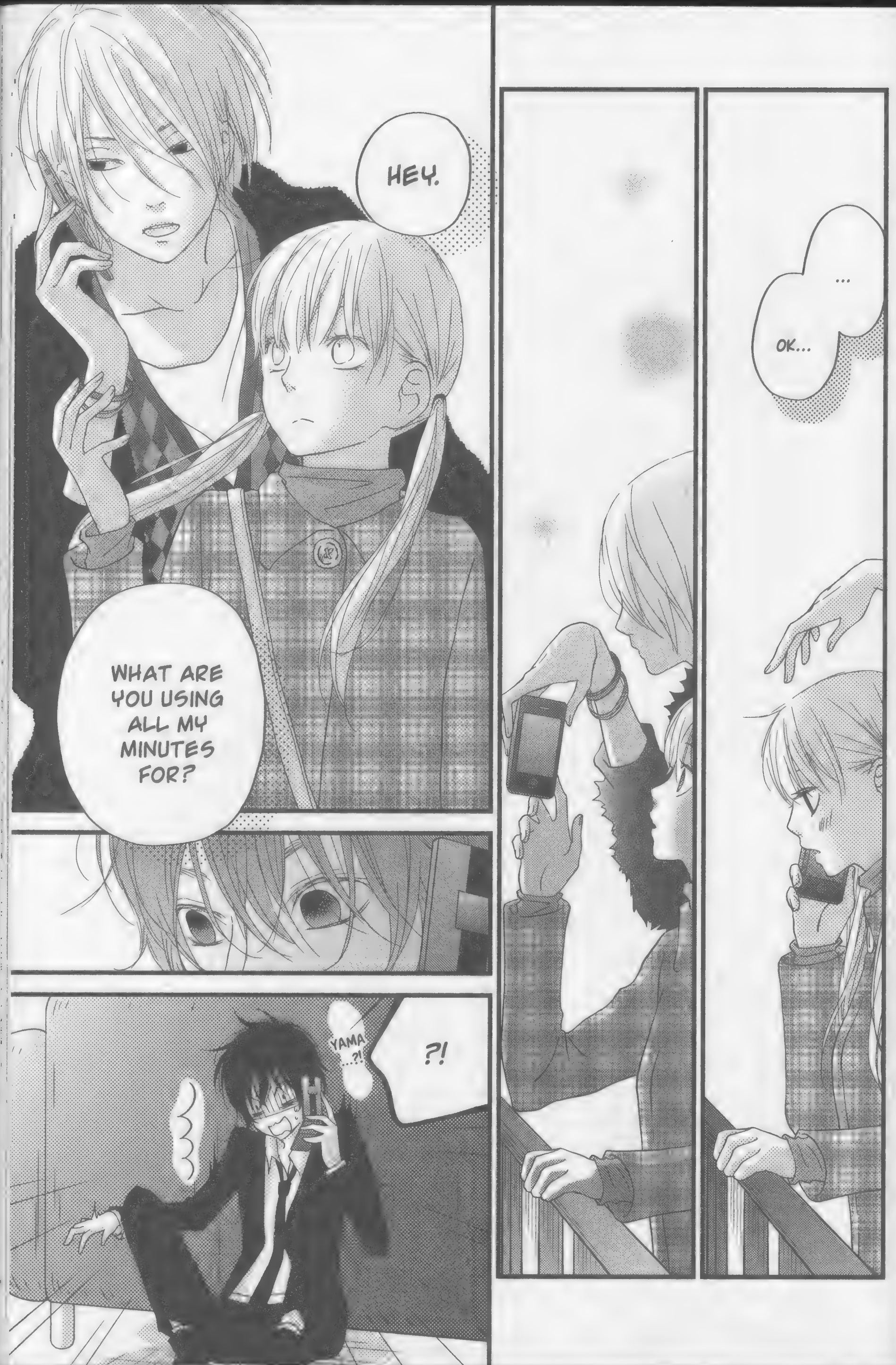

YES, I UNDERSTAND.
FOLD
FOLD
OH, GOOD.
MITCHAN-SAN ISN'T ACTING ANY DIFFERENT.
HE'S ACTING NORMAL.
MITCHAN-SAN ALWAYS MAKES ME FEEL BETTER.
...
...YOU'RE JUST GETTING BACK?
YEAH.
I'M THIRSTY. GIMME MONEY.
I BET THINGS WOULD GO A LOT BETTER FOR HARU-KUN AND MITTY...
WHEN YOU GET BACK, HANG YOUR SUIT UP.
OW
...IF ONE OF THEM WERE LIKE MITCHAN-SAN.
OH, MAN, IT WAS TERRIBLE!
THAT GROUP DATE WAS A TOTAL BUST!

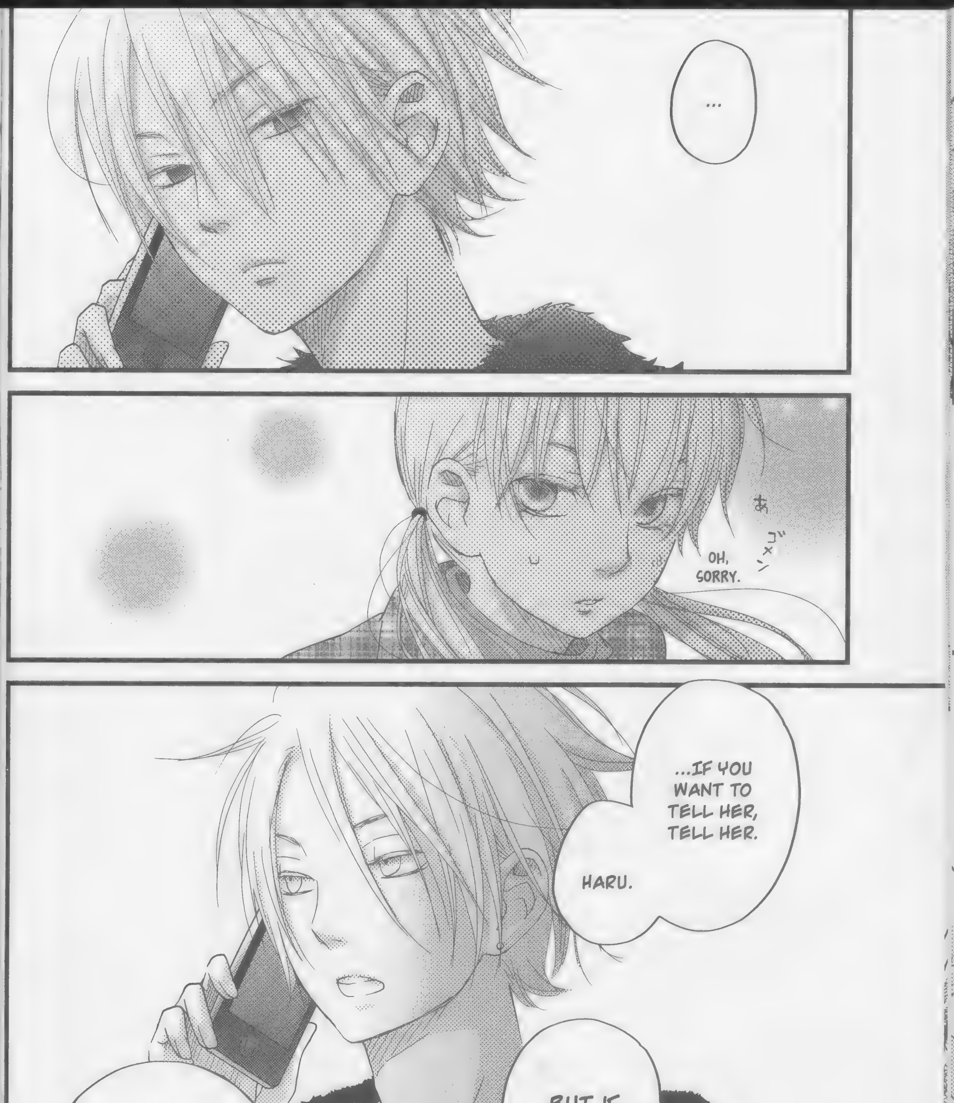

AND GEORGE EVEN SANG "MASQUERADE BALL"!
WHAT SONG IS THAT?
ガチャコン
KACHA CLUNK
BEEP
BEEP
BRRR-ING...
BRRR-ING...
OH, HARU! GET ONE FOR ME, TOO!
HEY!!
WE TOLD YOU TO STOP SPONGING OFF OF HARU-KUN!
JUST BECAUSE HARU-KUN'S A NICE GUY!!
OKAY.
BEEP
HEY, YOU FINALLY PICKED UP!
DAMMIT, WHY'D YOU HAVE YOUR PHONE OFF?!
BUT IT'S SUCH A PAIN TO GET OUT THE CHANGE.
WE HAVE TO SAVE OUR MONEY!!
...HUH? THE NERD QUEEN?
WHAT, SHE'S WITH YOU?
PUT HER ON.
JUST DO IT.
HEY, HARU!
I FOUND THE NERD QUEEN.
?
...SHIZUKU?
?
!
...HARU?
Orange

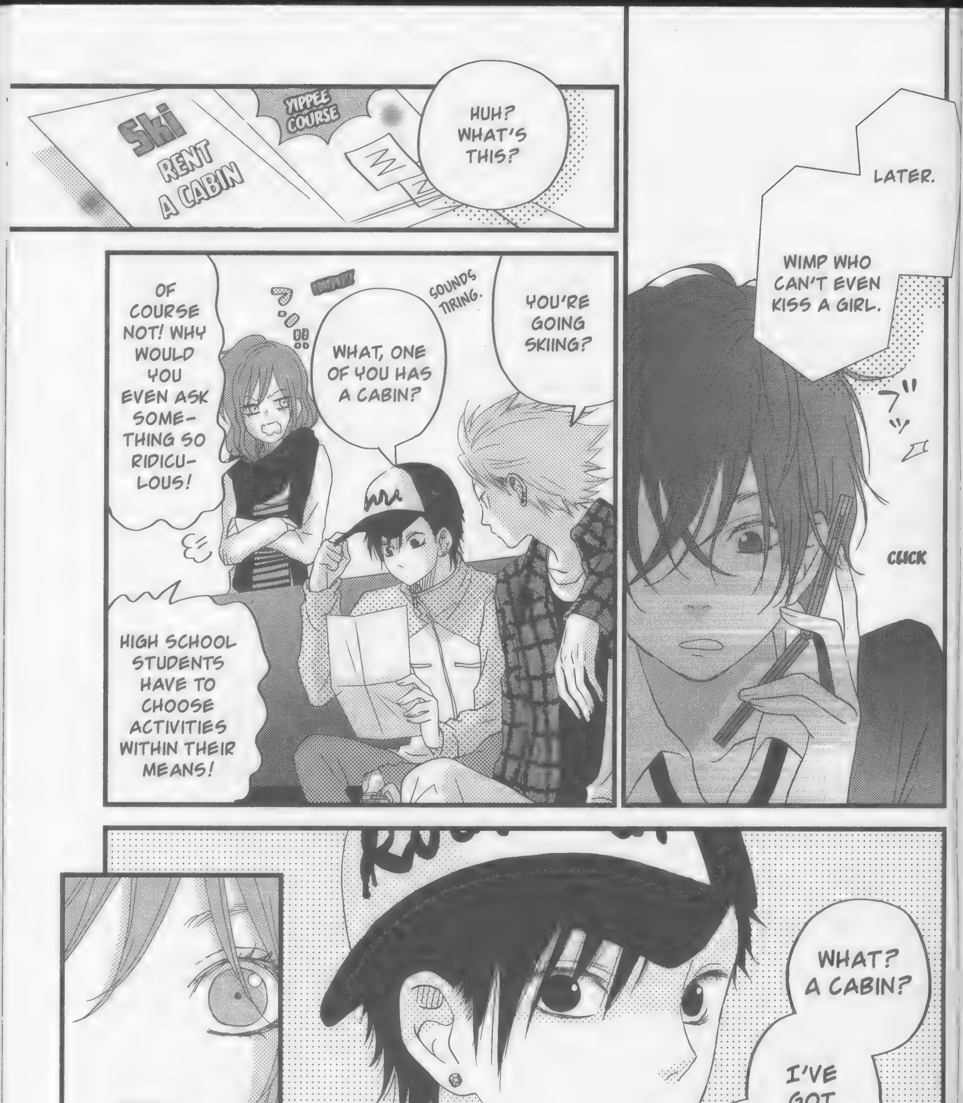

OH, GOOD.
YOU'RE ALIVE.
ONLY PEOPLE WHO ARE DESTITUTE IN HEART SPONGE OFF OF OTHERS!
IT'S FINE! WE'RE ALL FRIENDS!
HUH?
I WAS THINKING
I'D GO TO YOUR PLACE LATER.
WHAT ...?
...MUST BE BUSY,
GOING BACK AND FORTH.
SOUNDS NOISY OVER THERE.
YEAH.
NATSUME SAYS WE SHOULD GO SKIING FOR OUR PICNIC.
HUH?
WHY...
...DO I FEEL SO...
...RELIEVED?
YOU CAN'T ASK PEOPLE TO DO STUFF FOR YOU FOR FREE!
COME ON, DON'T GET SO MAD, NATSUME-CHAN.
WE DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF MONEY.
I KNOW, RIGHT?
...OKAY, LET'S GO SKIING.
HUH?
I TOLD YOU I'D GO WHEREVER YOU WANT,
DIDN'T I?

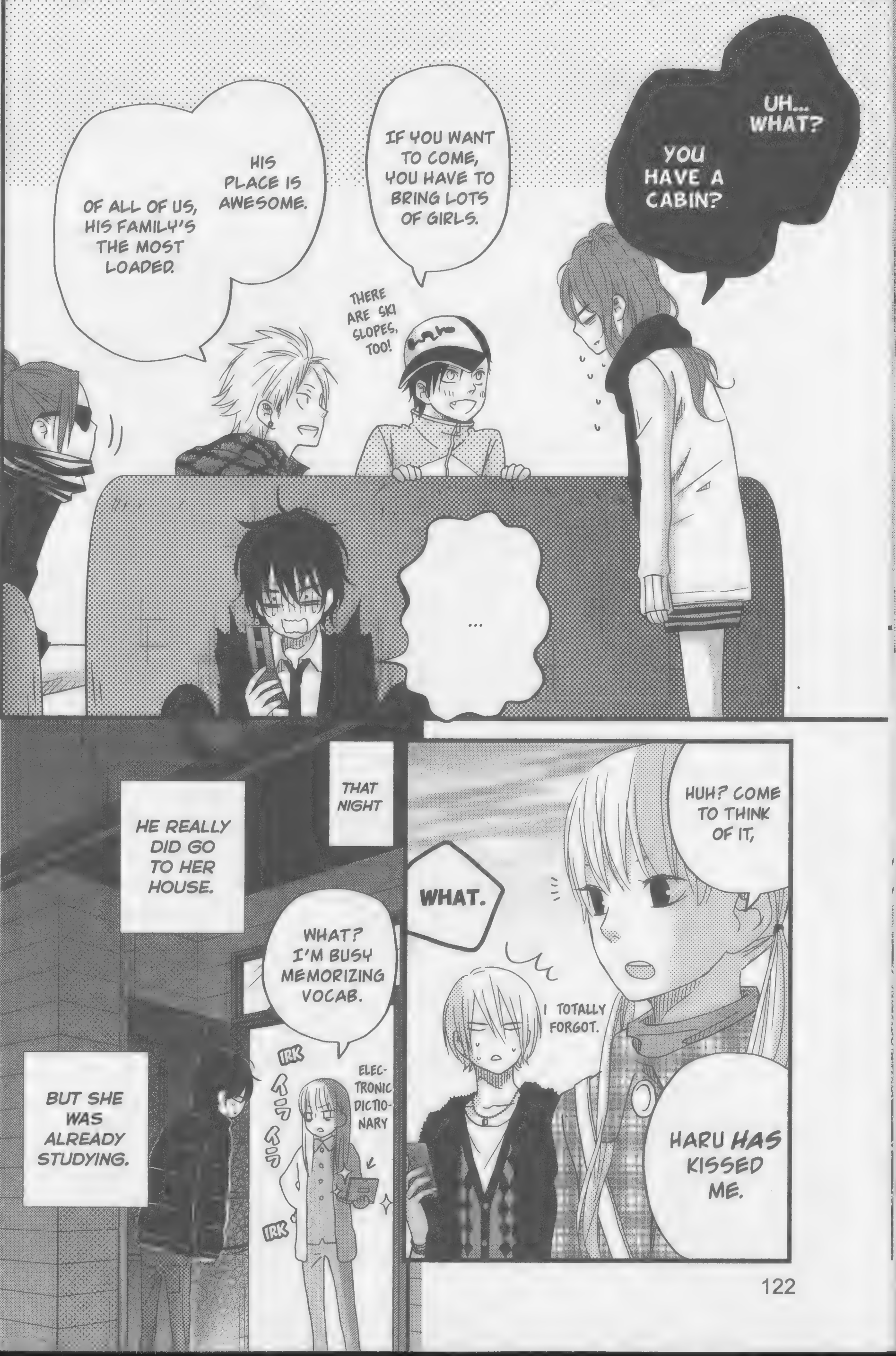

WE CAN SAVE UP THE MONEY.
LET'S GO.
WE'LL GO
AND PLAY AS HARD AS WE CAN.
ALL TOGETHER.
...YEAH.
ARE YOU GONNA PLAY, TOO, SHIZUKU?
YEAH.
I'LL DO MY BEST.
DID YOU EAT SOMETHING WEIRD?
I WONDER
WHAT HARU'S FACE LOOKS LIKE RIGHT NOW.
TODAY? I HAD KINPIRA FOR LUNCH.
OH, A CHEAPSKATE'S DIET!


OH.
WHEN IT'S JUST HIS VOICE, HE SEEMS SO FAR AWAY.
I KIND OF
WANT TO SEE HIS FACE.
YOU KNOW...
I THINK I AM GONNA GO TO YOUR HOUSE.

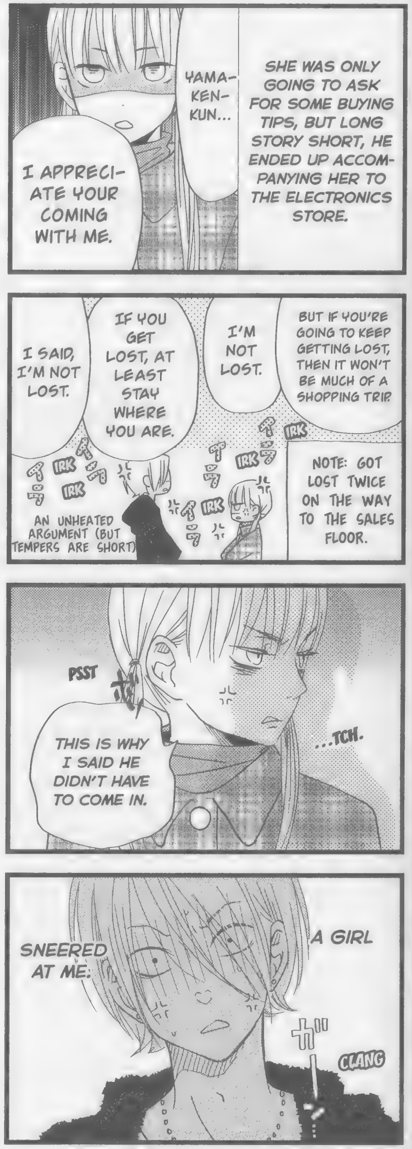

...
OK...
HEY.
WHAT ARE YOU USING ALL MY MINUTES FOR?
?!
YAMA ...?!


…
あ ゴメン
OH, SORRY.
...IF YOU WANT TO TELL HER, TELL HER.
HARU.
BUT IF YOU DO,
THEN I'M NOT BACKING DOWN.

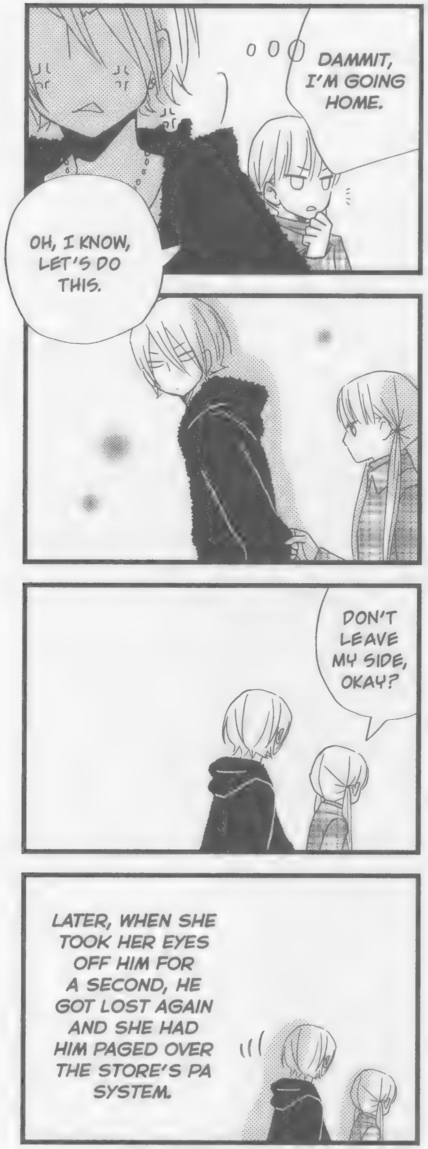

LATER.
WIMP WHO CAN'T EVEN KISS A GIRL.
ブツ
CLICK
Ski RENT A CABIN
YIPPEE COURSE
HUH? WHAT'S THIS?
YOU'RE GOING SKIING?
SOUNDS TIRING.
WHAT, ONE OF YOU HAS A CABIN?
OF COURSE NOT! WHY WOULD YOU EVEN ASK SOMETHING SO RIDICULOUS!
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE TO CHOOSE ACTIVITIES WITHIN THEIR MEANS!
WHAT? A CABIN?
I'VE GOT ONE.
Ski RENT A CABIN
WANNA GO?


UH... WHAT?
YOU HAVE A CABIN?
IF YOU WANT TO COME, YOU HAVE TO BRING LOTS OF GIRLS.
HIS PLACE IS AWESOME.
OF ALL OF US, HIS FAMILY'S THE MOST LOADED.
THERE ARE SKI SLOPES, TOO!
...
HUH? COME TO THINK OF IT,
HARU HAS KISSED ME.
WHAT.
I TOTALLY FORGOT.
THAT NIGHT
HE REALLY DID GO TO HER HOUSE.
WHAT? I'M BUSY MEMORIZING VOCAB.
IRK
ELECTRONIC DICTIONARY
IRK
BUT SHE WAS ALREADY STUDYING.

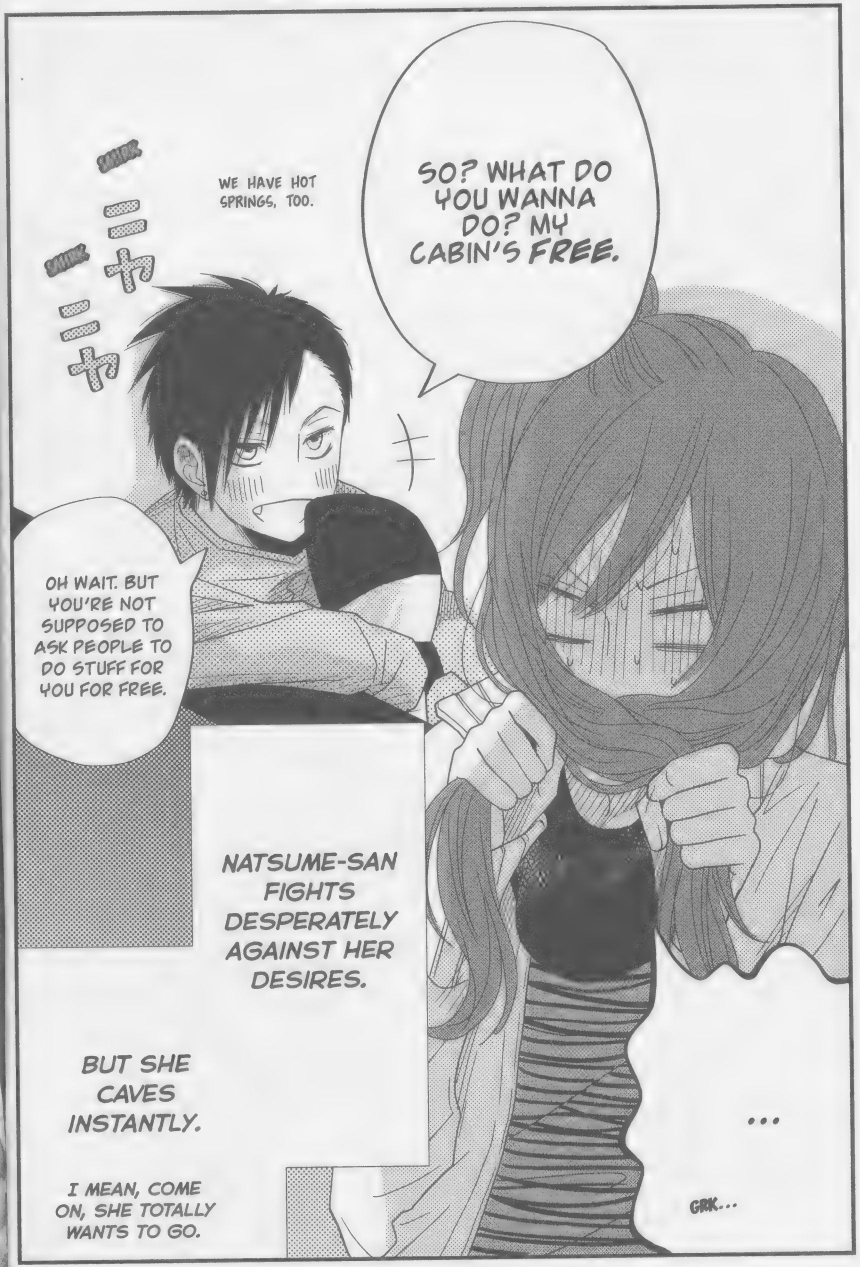
At the Electronics Store, part 1


SHE WAS ONLY GOING TO ASK FOR SOME BUYING TIPS, BUT LONG STORY SHORT, HE ENDED UP ACCOMPANYING HER TO THE ELECTRONICS STORE.
YAMA-KEN-KUN...
I APPRECIATE YOUR COMING WITH ME.
BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP GETTING LOST, THEN IT WON'T BE MUCH OF A SHOPPING TRIP.
I'M NOT LOST.
IF YOU GET LOST, AT LEAST STAY WHERE YOU ARE.
I SAID, I'M NOT LOST.
IRK
NOTE: GOT LOST TWICE ON THE WAY TO THE SALES FLOOR.
AN UNHEATED ARGUMENT (BUT TEMPERS ARE SHORT)
...TCH.
PSST
THIS IS WHY I SAID HE DIDN'T HAVE TO COME IN.
A GIRL
SNEERED AT ME.
CLANG

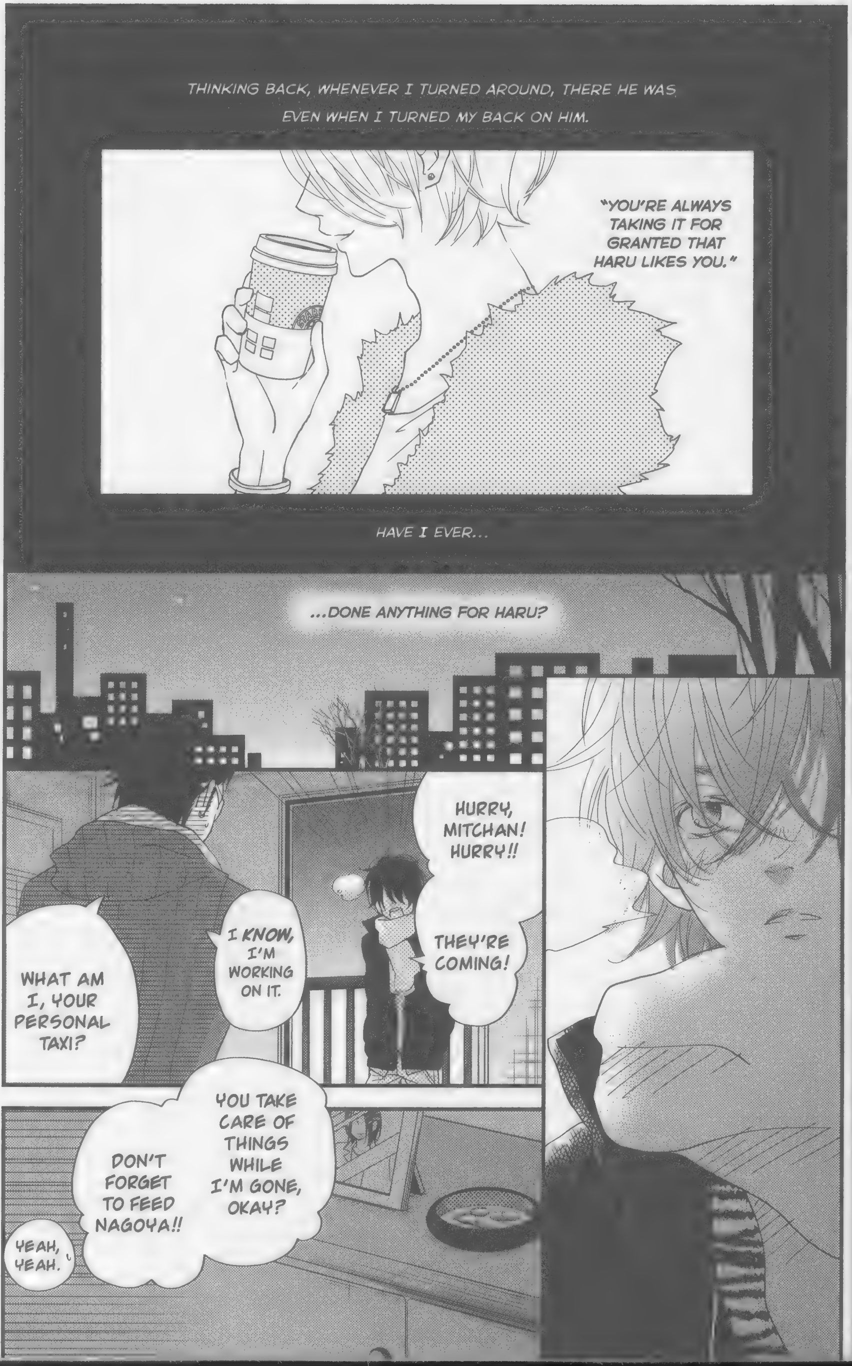
At the Electronics Store, Part 2

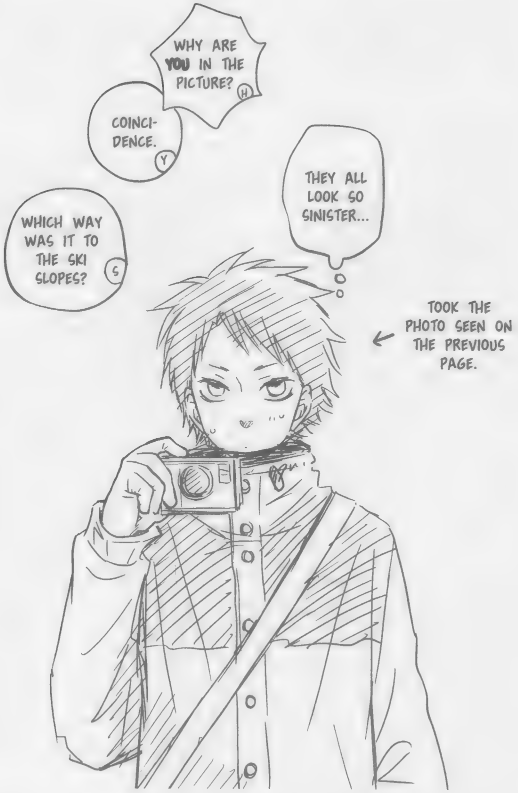

DAMMIT, I'M GOING HOME.
OH, I KNOW, LET'S DO THIS.
DON'T LEAVE MY SIDE, OKAY?
LATER, WHEN SHE TOOK HER EYES OFF HIM FOR A SECOND, HE GOT LOST AGAIN AND SHE HAD HIM PAGED OVER THE STORE'S PA SYSTEM.

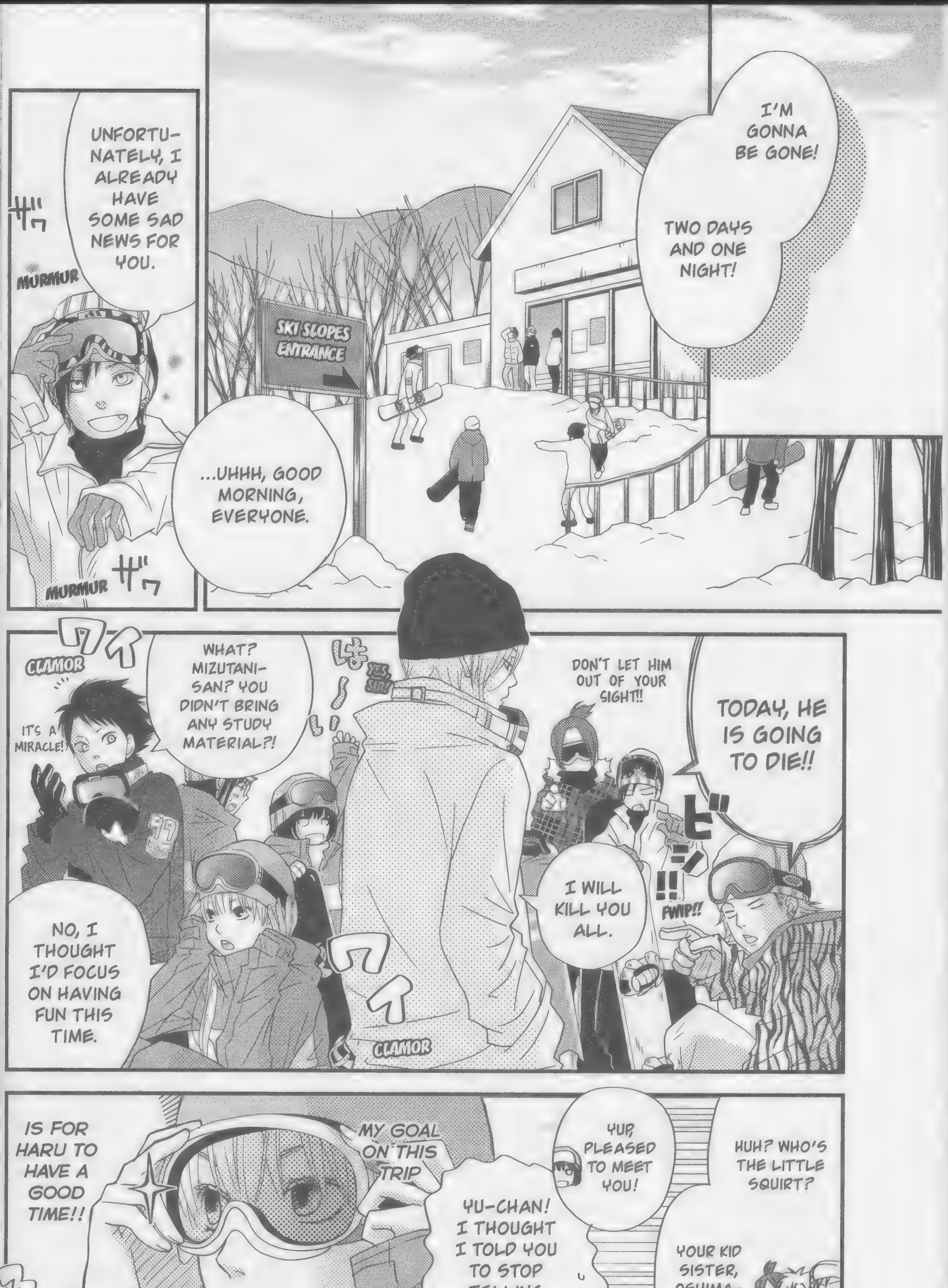
Post-Chapter 19 Bonus:
"Somewhere Between Greed and Integrity"

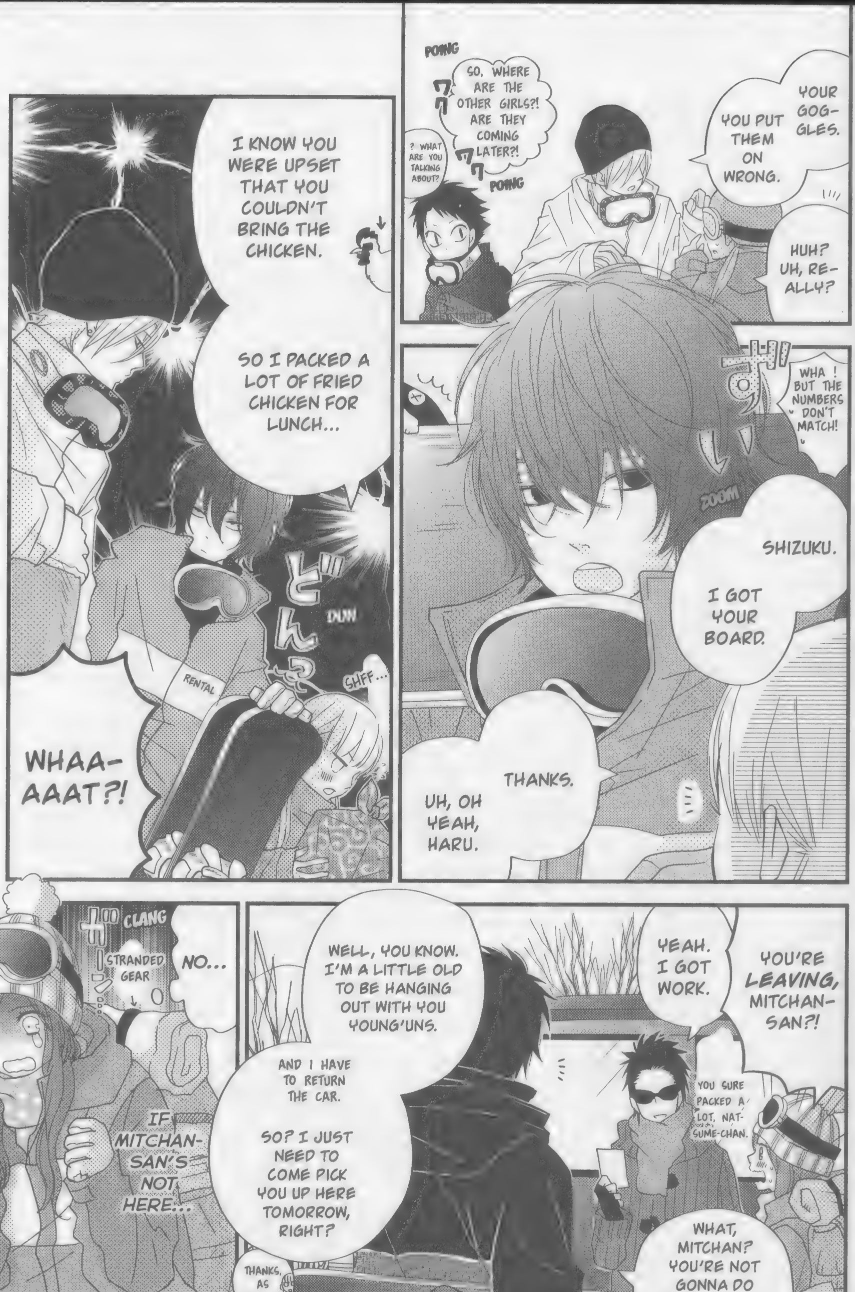

So? What do you wanna do? My cabin's **free.**
We have hot springs, too.
ニヤニヤ
SMIRK
SMIRK
Oh wait. But you're not supposed to ask people to do stuff for you for free.
Natsume-san fights desperately against her desires.
...
Grk...
But she caves instantly.
I mean, come on, she totally wants to go.

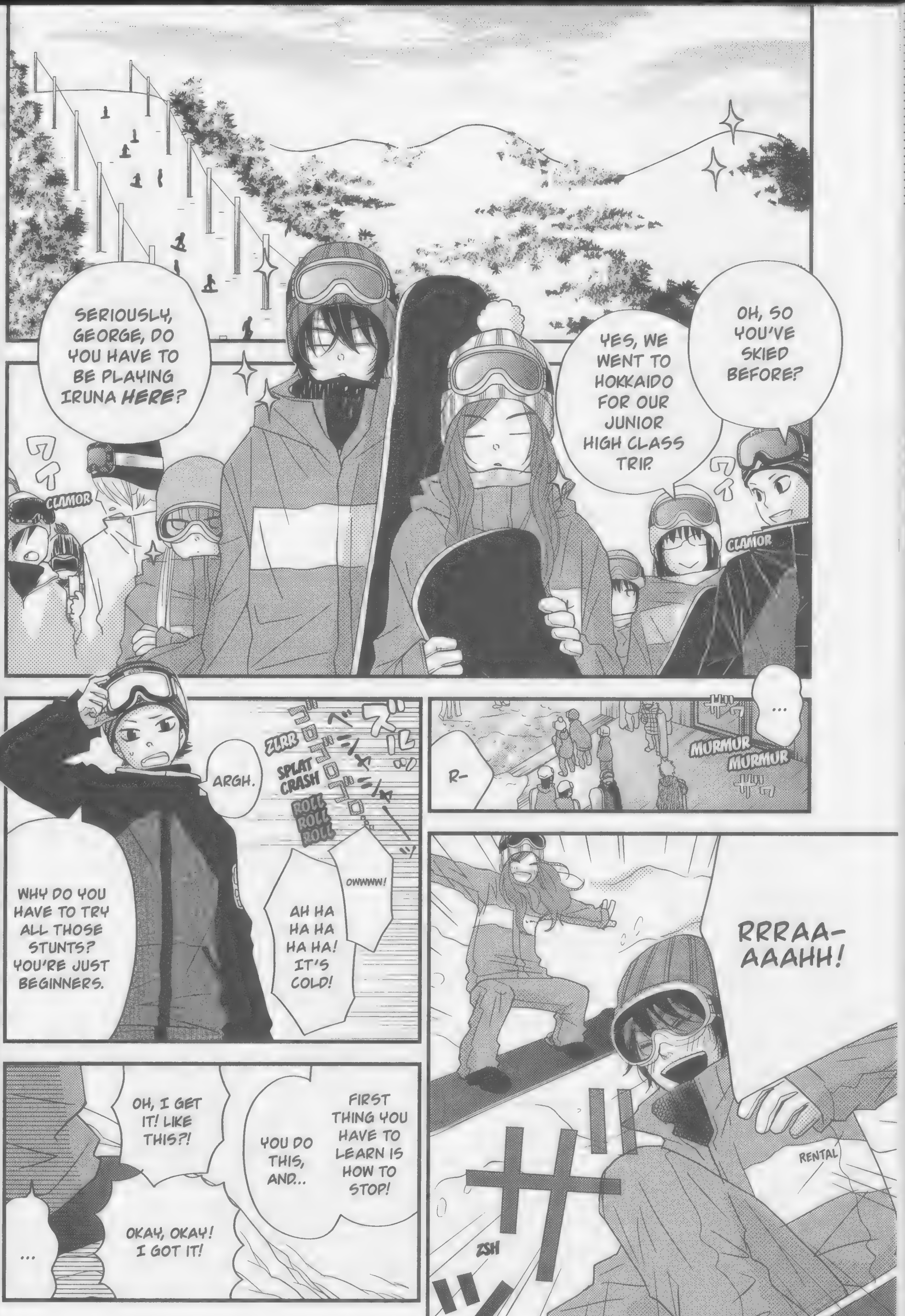
Chapter 20
Two Days, One Night

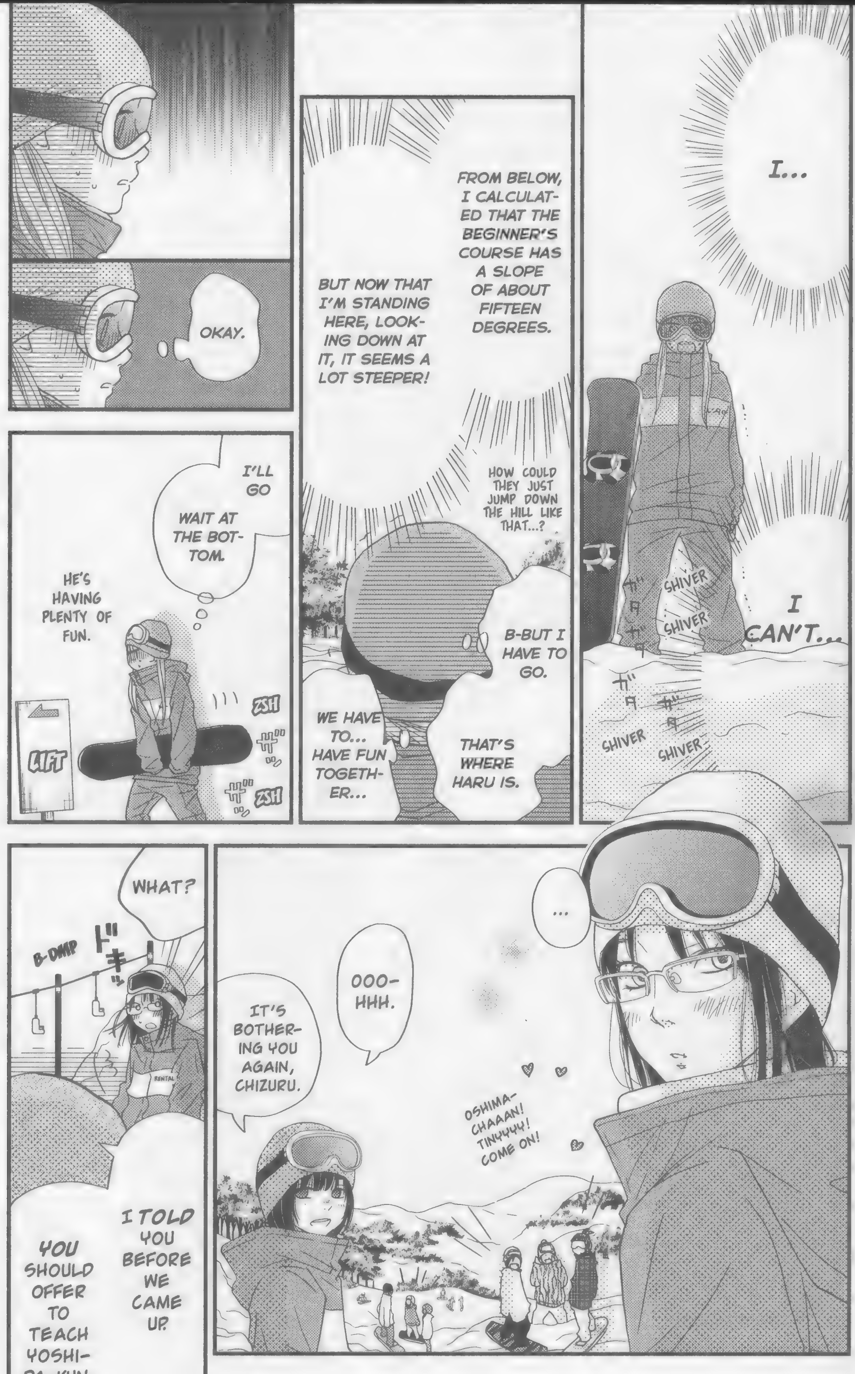

THINKING BACK, WHENEVER I TURNED AROUND, THERE HE WAS
EVEN WHEN I TURNED MY BACK ON HIM.
"YOU'RE ALWAYS TAKING IT FOR GRANTED THAT HARU LIKES YOU."
HAVE I EVER...
...DONE ANYTHING FOR HARU?
HURRY, MITCHAN! HURRY!!
THEY'RE COMING!
I *KNOW*, I'M WORKING ON IT.
WHAT AM I, YOUR PERSONAL TAXI?
YOU TAKE CARE OF THINGS WHILE I'M GONE, OKAY?
DON'T FORGET TO FEED NAGOYA!!
YEAH, YEAH.

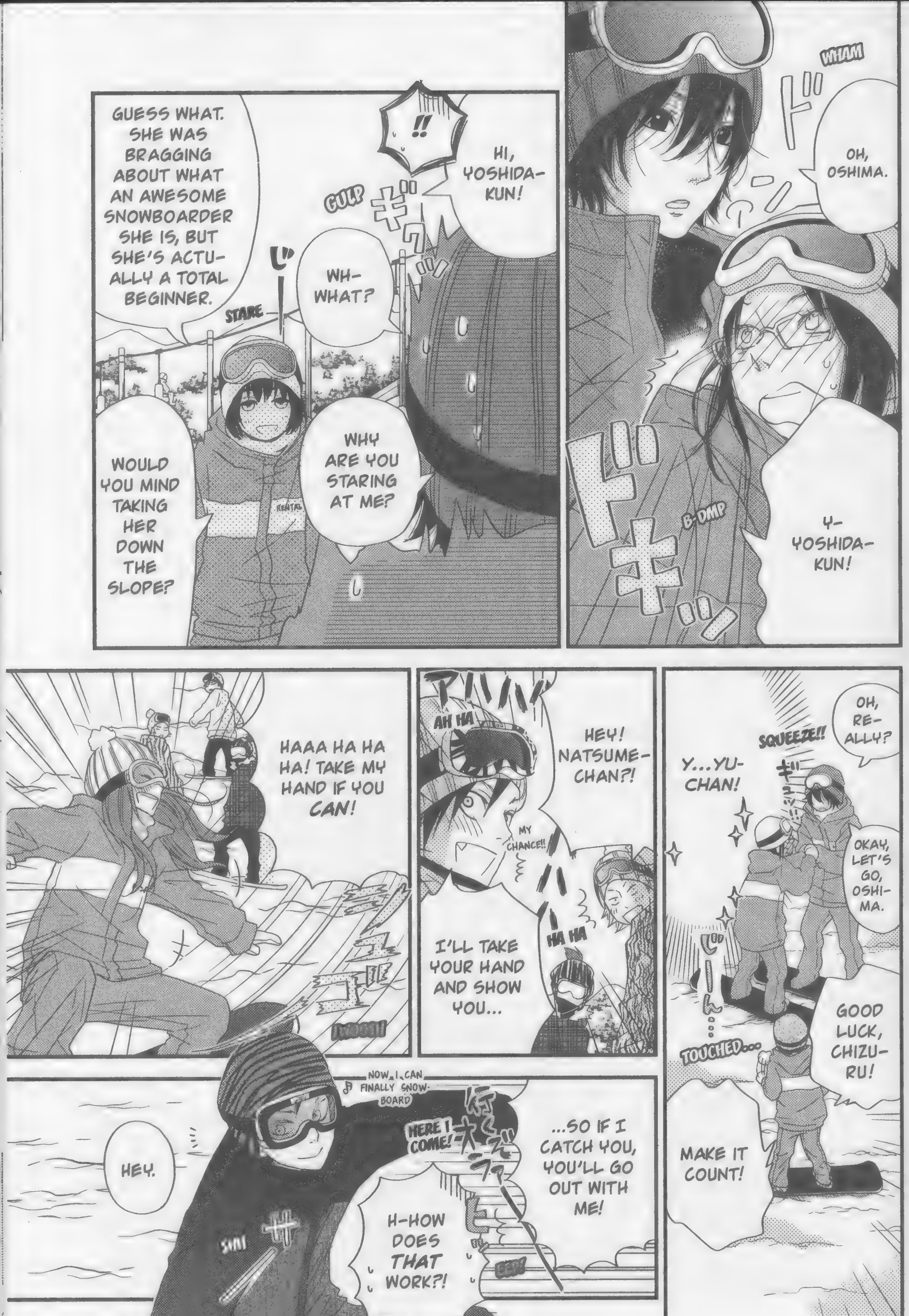

WHY ARE **YOU** IN THE PICTURE? H
COINCIDENCE. Y
THEY ALL LOOK SO SINISTER...
WHICH WAY WAS IT TO THE SKI SLOPES? S
TOOK THE PHOTO SEEN ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE.

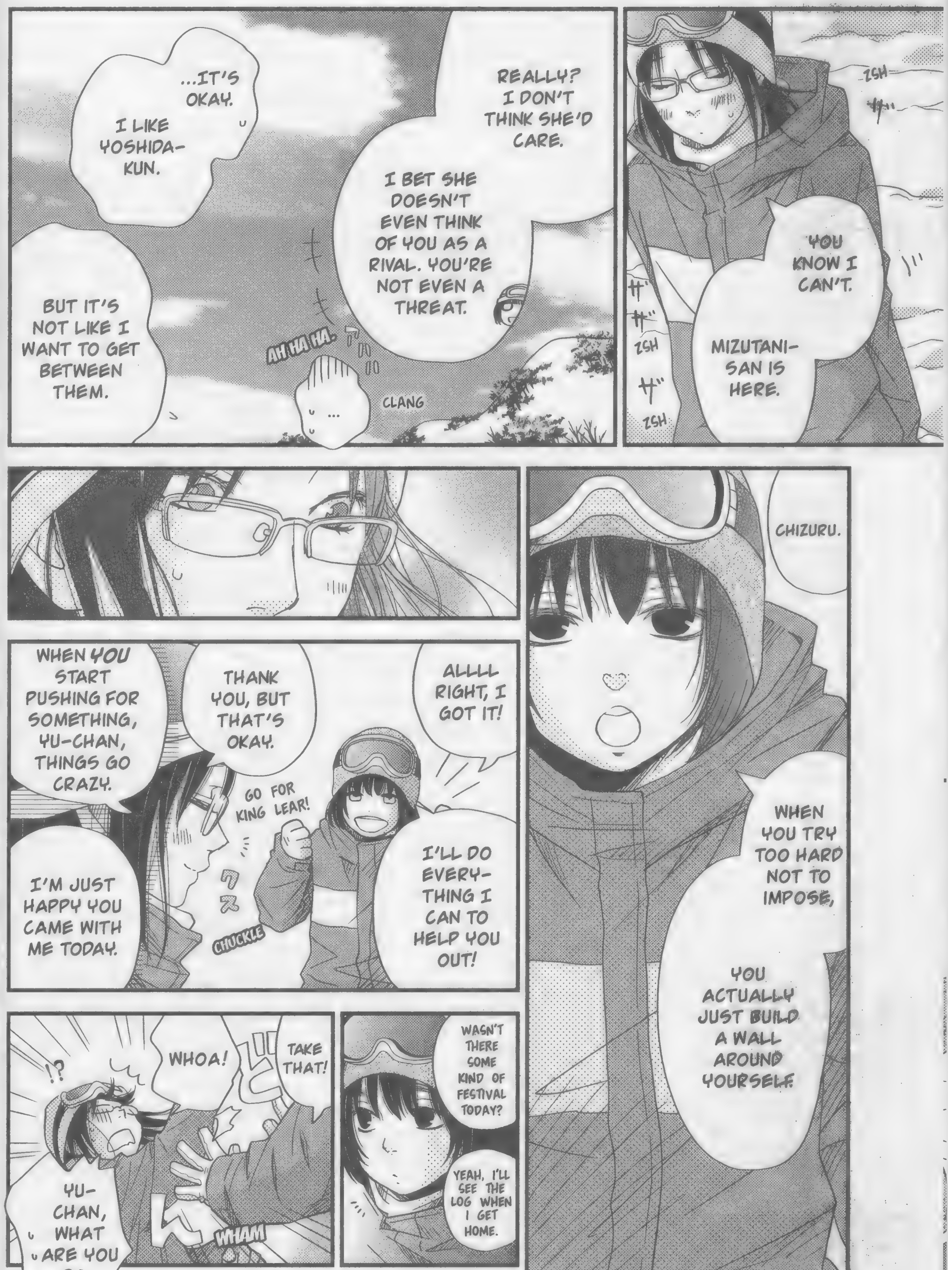

I'M GONNA BE GONE!
TWO DAYS AND ONE NIGHT!
SKI SLOPES ENTRANCE
UNFORTUNATELY, I ALREADY HAVE SOME SAD NEWS FOR YOU.
MURMUR
...UHHH, GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE.
MURMUR
TODAY, HE IS GOING TO DIE!!
DON'T LET HIM OUT OF YOUR SIGHT!!
YES, SIR!
I WILL KILL YOU ALL.
FWIP!!
WHAT? MIZUTANI-SAN? YOU DIDN'T BRING ANY STUDY MATERIAL?!
CLAMOR
IT'S A MIRACLE!
NO, I THOUGHT I'D FOCUS ON HAVING FUN THIS TIME.
CLAMOR
HUH? WHO'S THE LITTLE SQUIRT?
YOUR KID SISTER, OSHIMA-CHAN?
YUP, PLEASED TO MEET YOU!
YU-CHAN! I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO STOP TELLING THOSE RIDICULOUS LIES!
MY GOAL ON THIS TRIP
IS FOR HARU TO HAVE A GOOD TIME!!
SCHAK

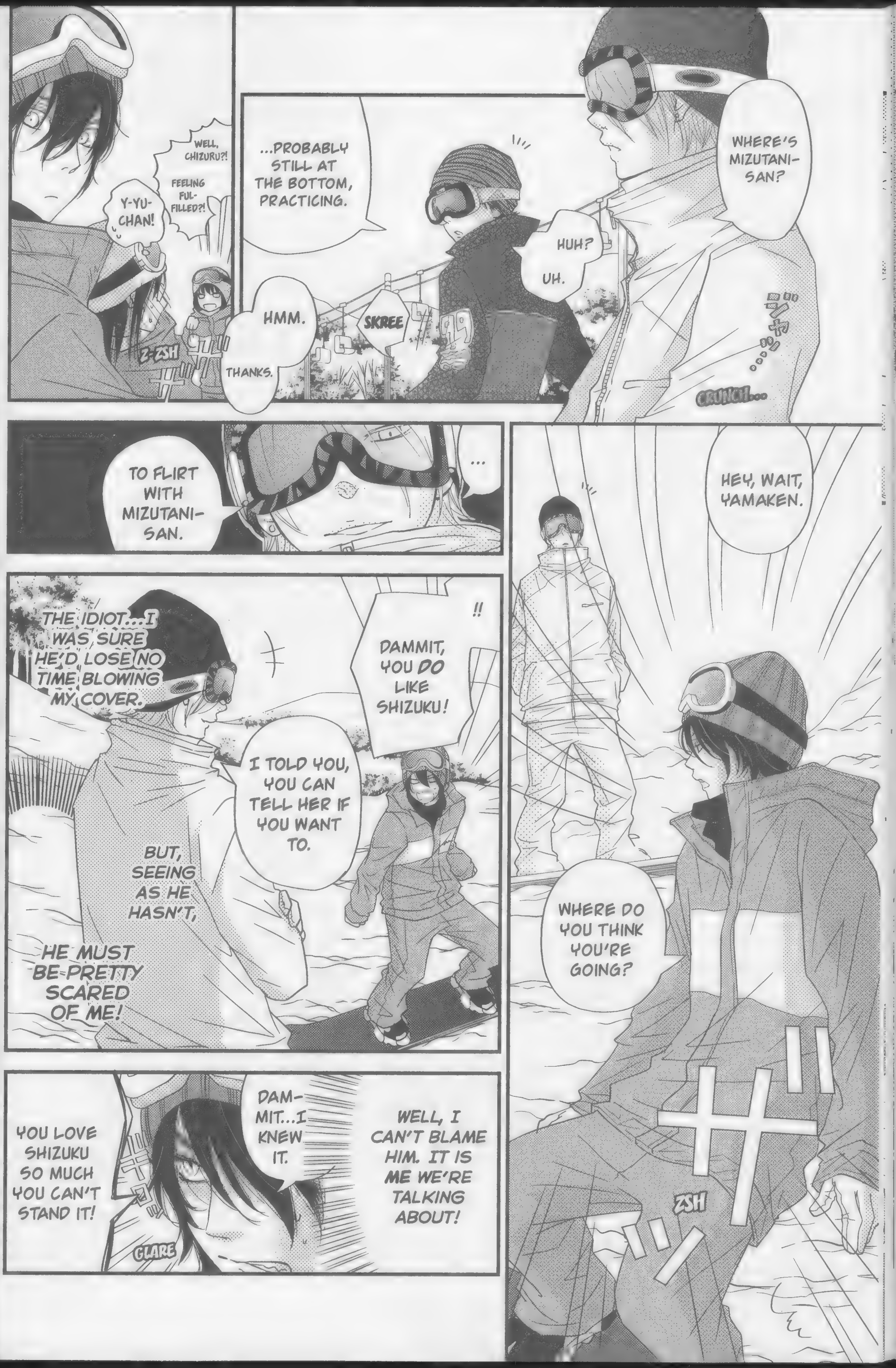

YOUR GOGGLES.
YOU PUT THEM ON WRONG.
HUH? UH, REALLY?
POING
SO, WHERE ARE THE OTHER GIRLS?! ARE THEY COMING LATER?!
? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
POING
I KNOW YOU WERE UPSET THAT YOU COULDN'T BRING THE CHICKEN.
SO I PACKED A LOT OF FRIED CHICKEN FOR LUNCH...
DUN
SHFF...
RENTAL
WHAAA-AAAT?!
WHA! BUT THE NUMBERS DON'T MATCH!
ZOOM
SHIZUKU.
I GOT YOUR BOARD.
THANKS.
UH, OH YEAH, HARU.
YOU'RE LEAVING, MITCHAN-SAN?!
YEAH. I GOT WORK.
WELL, YOU KNOW. I'M A LITTLE OLD TO BE HANGING OUT WITH YOU YOUNG'UNS.
AND I HAVE TO RETURN THE CAR.
SO? I JUST NEED TO COME PICK YOU UP HERE TOMORROW, RIGHT?
YOU SURE PACKED A LOT, NATSUME-CHAN.
WHAT, MITCHAN? YOU'RE NOT GONNA DO SOME SKIING BEFORE YOU LEAVE?
SNACKS
THANKS, AS ALWAYS.
NO PROBLEM.
NO...
CLANG
STRANDED GEAR
IF MITCHAN-SAN'S NOT HERE...
THEN WHAT IS IT ALL FOR, ANYWAY?

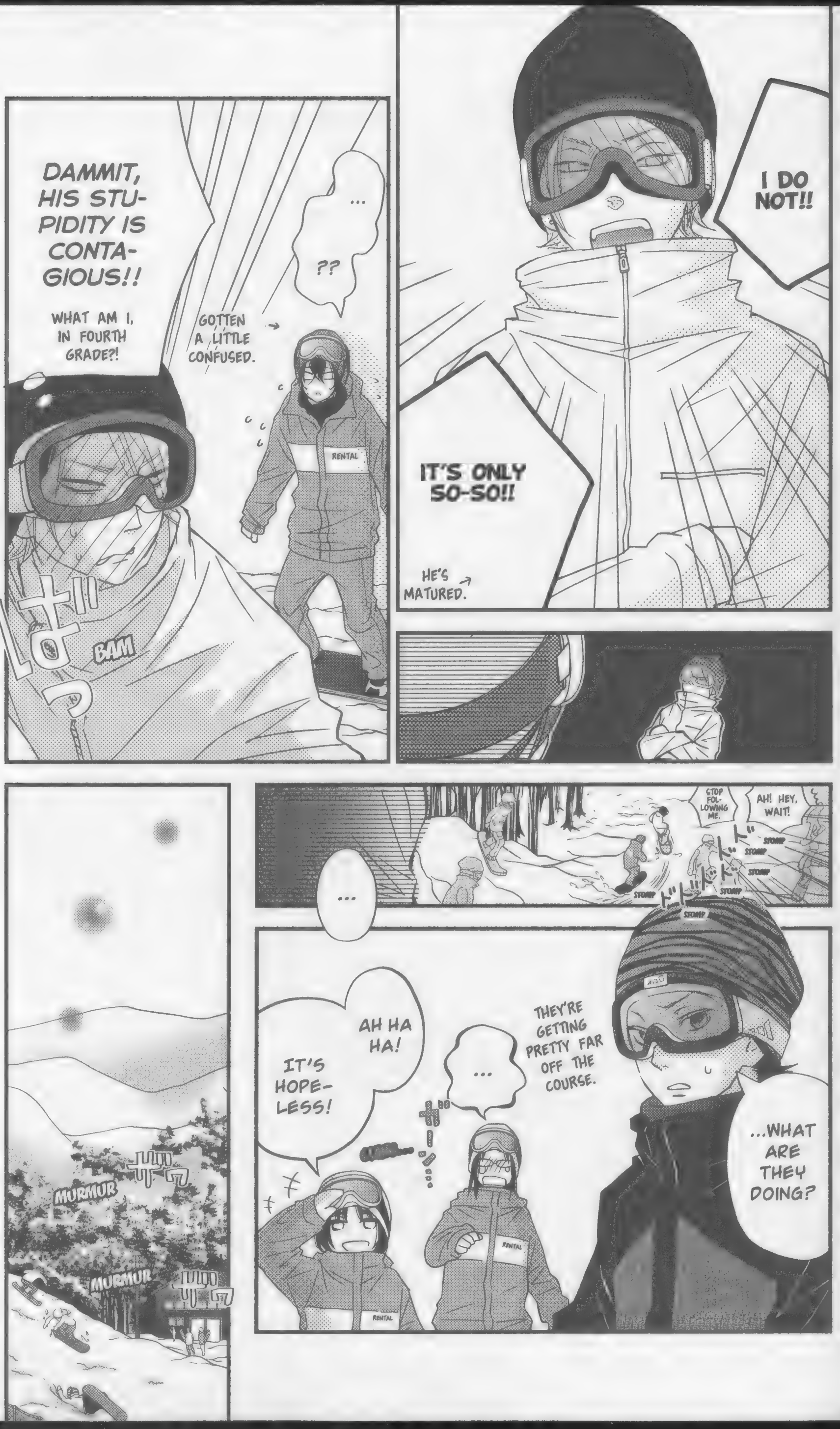

OH, SO YOU'VE SKIED BEFORE?
YES, WE WENT TO HOKKAIDO FOR OUR JUNIOR HIGH CLASS TRIP.
SERIOUSLY, GEORGE, DO YOU HAVE TO BE PLAYING IRUNA *HERE*?
ワイ
CLAMOR
ワイ
CLAMOR
...
MURMUR MURMUR
R-
ZLRR
SPLAT CRASH
ROLL ROLL ROLL
ARGH.
OWWWW!
AH HA HA HA HA HA! IT'S COLD!
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO TRY ALL THOSE STUNTS? YOU'RE JUST BEGINNERS.
RRRAA-AAAHH!
RENTAL
ZSH
FIRST THING YOU HAVE TO LEARN IS HOW TO STOP!
YOU DO THIS, AND...
OH, I GET IT! LIKE THIS?!
OKAY, OKAY! I GOT IT!
...

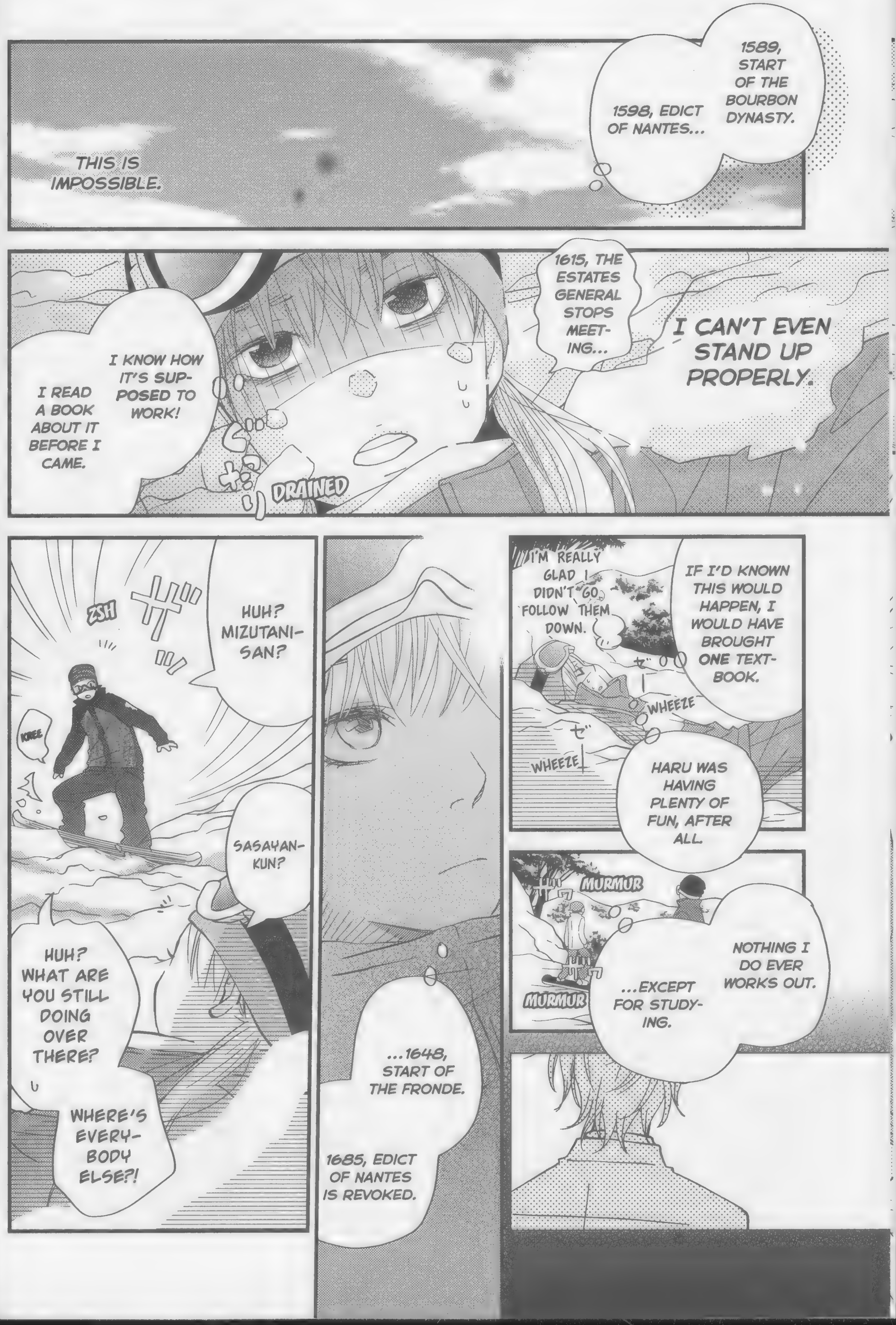

I...
I CAN'T...
SHIVER
SHIVER
SHIVER
SHIVER
FROM BELOW, I CALCULATED THAT THE BEGINNER'S COURSE HAS A SLOPE OF ABOUT FIFTEEN DEGREES.
BUT NOW THAT I'M STANDING HERE, LOOKING DOWN AT IT, IT SEEMS A LOT STEEPER!
HOW COULD THEY JUST JUMP DOWN THE HILL LIKE THAT...?
B-BUT I HAVE TO GO.
THAT'S WHERE HARU IS.
WE HAVE TO... HAVE FUN TOGETHER...
OKAY.
I'LL GO WAIT AT THE BOTTOM.
HE'S HAVING PLENTY OF FUN.
LIFT
ZSH
ZSH
...
OOO-HHH.
IT'S BOTHERING YOU AGAIN, CHIZURU.
OSHIMA-CHAAAN! TINYYYY! COME ON!
WHAT?
B-DMP
ドキッ
RENTAL
I *TOLD* YOU BEFORE WE CAME UP.
YOU SHOULD OFFER TO TEACH YOSHIDA-KUN.

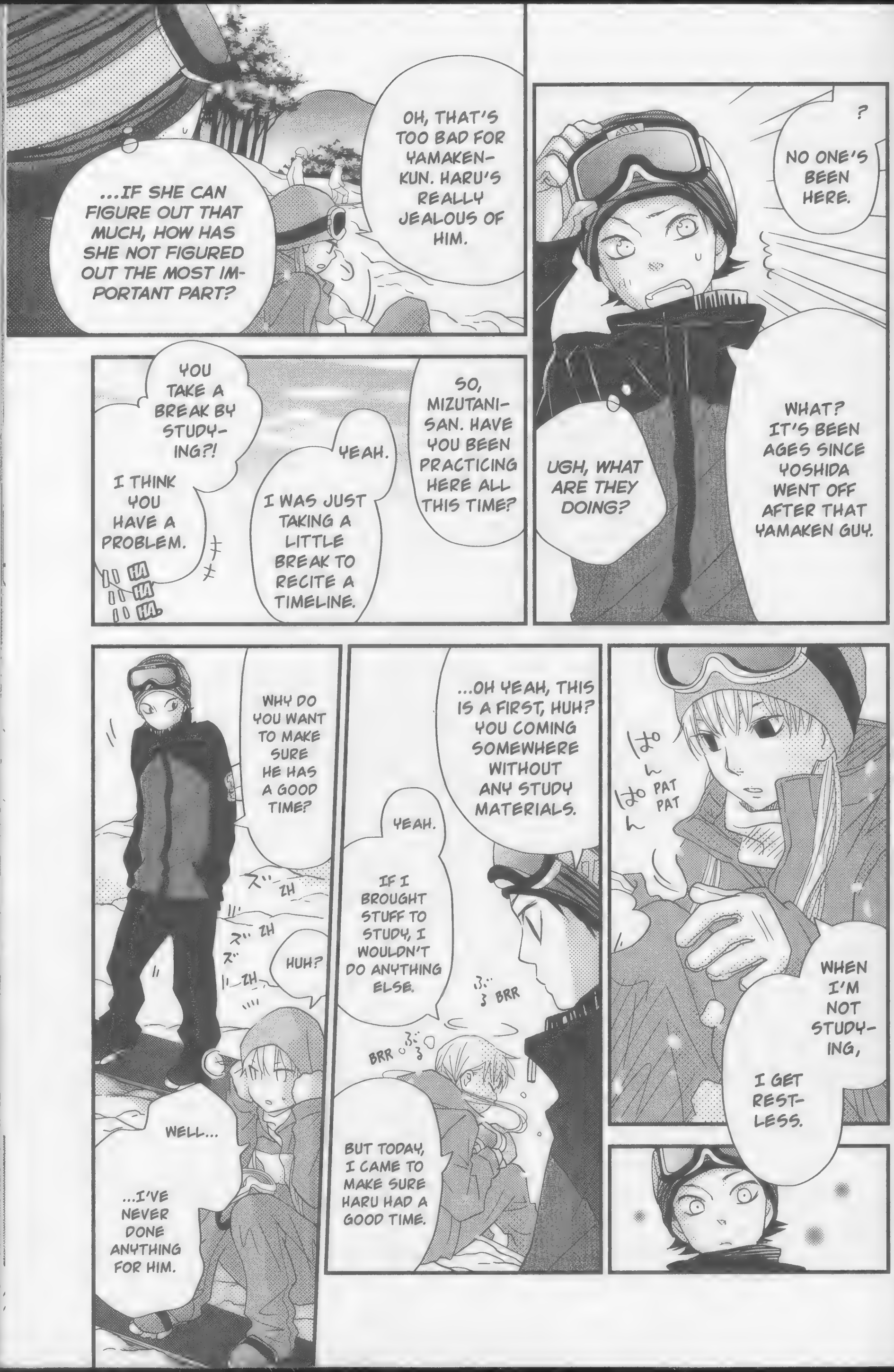

WHAM
OH, OSHIMA.
B-DMP
Y-YOSHIDA-KUN!
HI, YOSHIDA-KUN!
!!
GUESS WHAT. SHE WAS BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT AN AWESOME SNOWBOARDER SHE IS, BUT SHE'S ACTUALLY A TOTAL BEGINNER.
GULP
WH-WHAT?
STARE
WHY ARE YOU STARING AT ME?
RENTAL
WOULD YOU MIND TAKING HER DOWN THE SLOPE?
OH, REALLY?
SQUEEZE!!
Y...YU-CHAN!
OKAY, LET'S GO, OSHIMA.
TOUCHED...
GOOD LUCK, CHIZURU!
MAKE IT COUNT!
HEY! NATSUME-CHAN?!
AH HA
MY CHANCE!!
HA HA
I'LL TAKE YOUR HAND AND SHOW YOU...
HAAA HA HA HA! TAKE MY HAND IF YOU CAN!
WHOOSH
...SO IF I CATCH YOU, YOU'LL GO OUT WITH ME!
HERE I COME!
NOW I CAN FINALLY SNOWBOARD
H-HOW DOES THAT WORK?!
HEY.

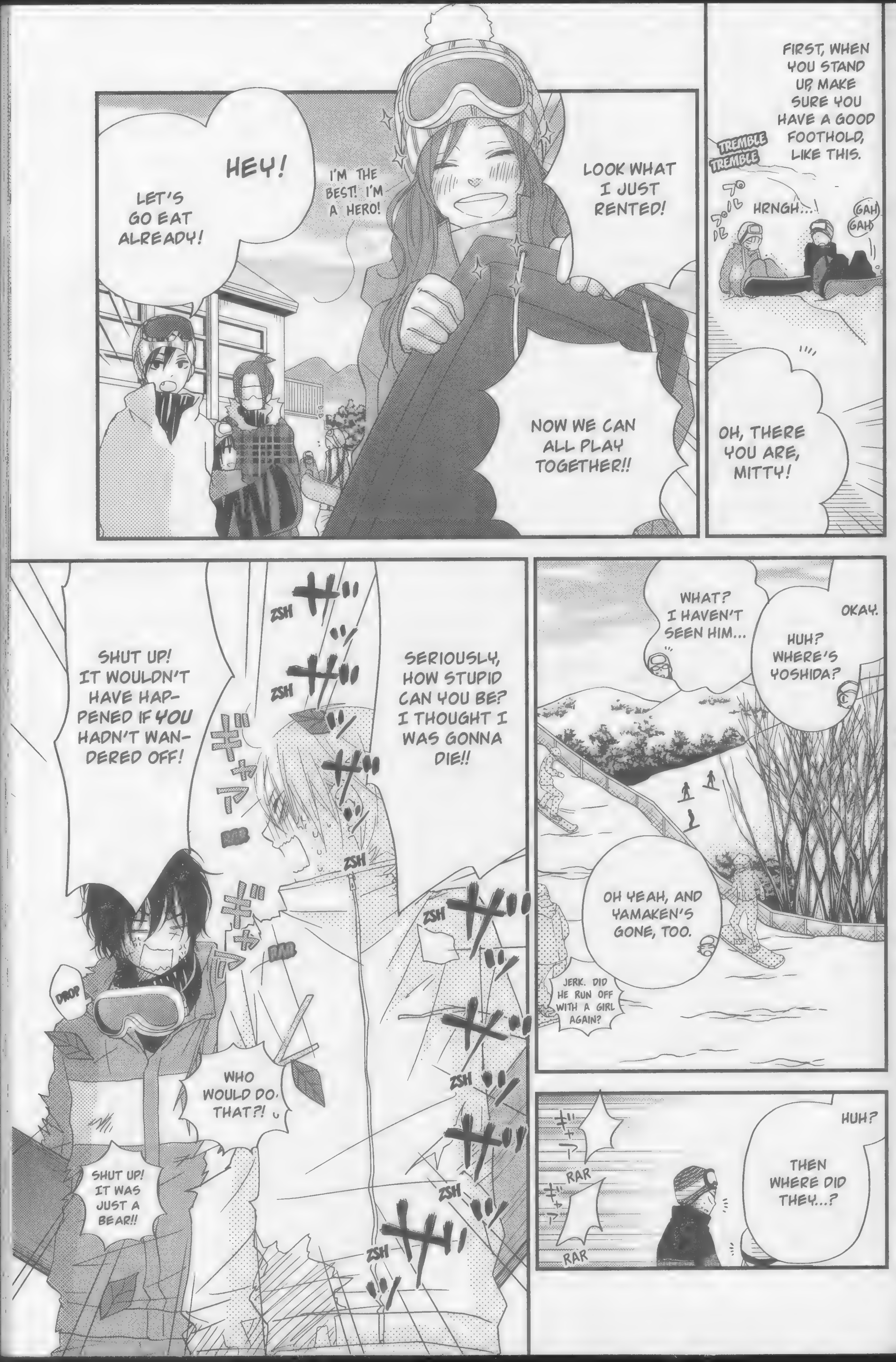

YOU KNOW I CAN'T.
ZSH
MIZUTANI-SAN IS HERE.
REALLY? I DON'T THINK SHE'D CARE.
I BET SHE DOESN'T EVEN THINK OF YOU AS A RIVAL. YOU'RE NOT EVEN A THREAT.
AH HA HA.
CLANG
...
...IT'S OKAY.
I LIKE YOSHIDA-KUN.
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I WANT TO GET BETWEEN THEM.
CHIZURU.
WHEN YOU TRY TOO HARD NOT TO IMPOSE,
YOU ACTUALLY JUST BUILD A WALL AROUND YOURSELF.
ALLLL RIGHT, I GOT IT!
I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO HELP YOU OUT!
GO FOR KING LEAR!
THANK YOU, BUT THAT'S OKAY.
WHEN YOU START PUSHING FOR SOMETHING, YU-CHAN, THINGS GO CRAZY.
CHUCKLE
I'M JUST HAPPY YOU CAME WITH ME TODAY.
WASN'T THERE SOME KIND OF FESTIVAL TODAY?
YEAH. I'LL SEE THE LOG WHEN I GET HOME.
TAKE THAT!
WHOA!
!?
YU-CHAN, WHAT ARE YOU DO-
WHAM

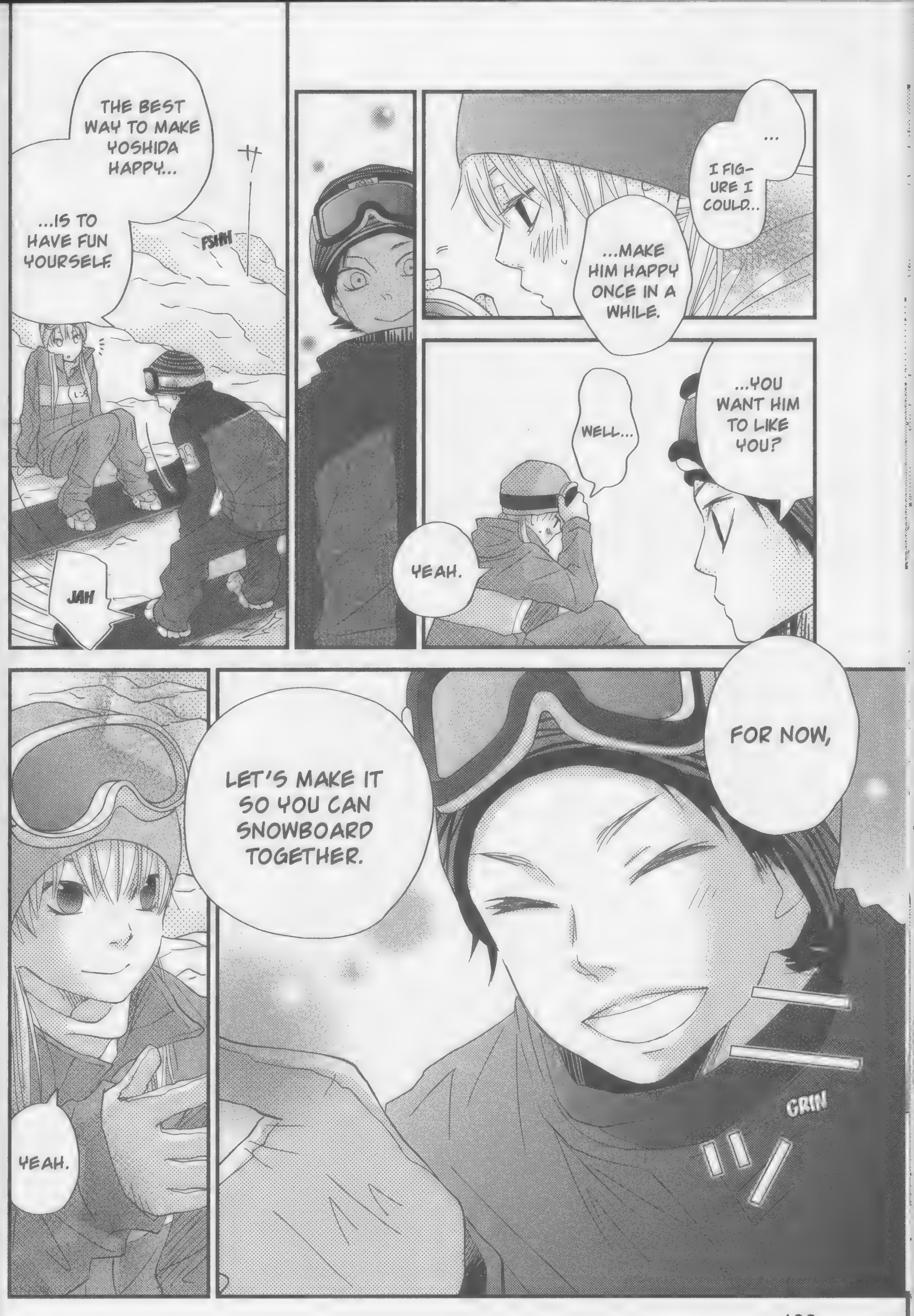

WHERE'S MIZUTANI-SAN?
HUH?
UH.
CRUNCH...
...PROBABLY STILL AT THE BOTTOM, PRACTICING.
SKREE
HMM.
THANKS.
WELL, CHIZURU?! FEELING FULFILLED?!
Y-YU-CHAN!
Z-ZSH
HEY, WAIT, YAMAKEN.
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
ZSH
...
TO FLIRT WITH MIZUTANI-SAN.
!!
DAMMIT, YOU DO LIKE SHIZUKU!
I TOLD YOU, YOU CAN TELL HER IF YOU WANT TO.
THE IDIOT...I WAS SURE HE'D LOSE NO TIME BLOWING MY COVER.
BUT, SEEING AS HE HASN'T,
HE MUST BE PRETTY SCARED OF ME!
WELL, I CAN'T BLAME HIM. IT IS ME WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!
DAMMIT...I KNEW IT.
YOU LOVE SHIZUKU SO MUCH YOU CAN'T STAND IT!
GLARE

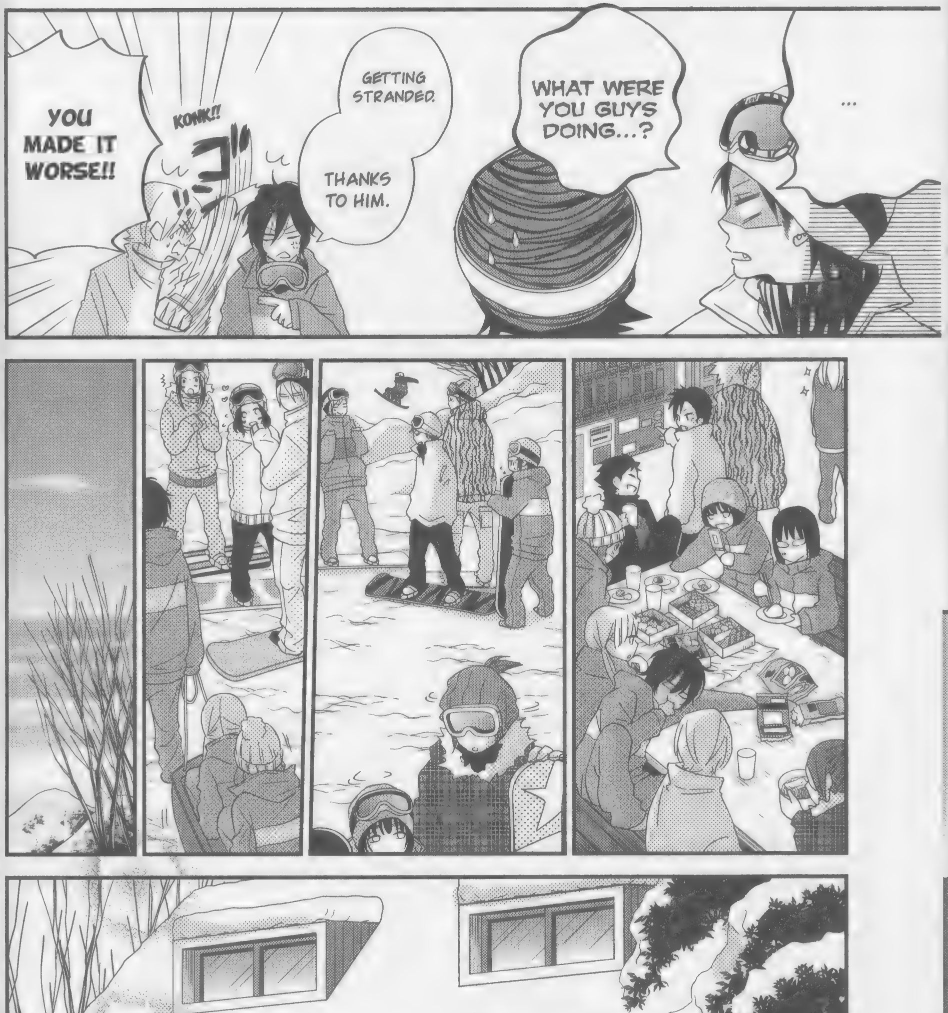

I DO NOT!!
IT'S ONLY SO-SO!!
HE'S MATURED.
...
??
DAMMIT, HIS STUPIDITY IS CONTAGIOUS!!
WHAT AM I, IN FOURTH GRADE?!
GOTTEN A LITTLE CONFUSED.
BAM
AH! HEY, WAIT!
STOP FOLLOWING ME.
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
...
...WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
THEY'RE GETTING PRETTY FAR OFF THE COURSE.
...
AH HA HA!
IT'S HOPELESS!
RENTAL
MURMUR
MURMUR

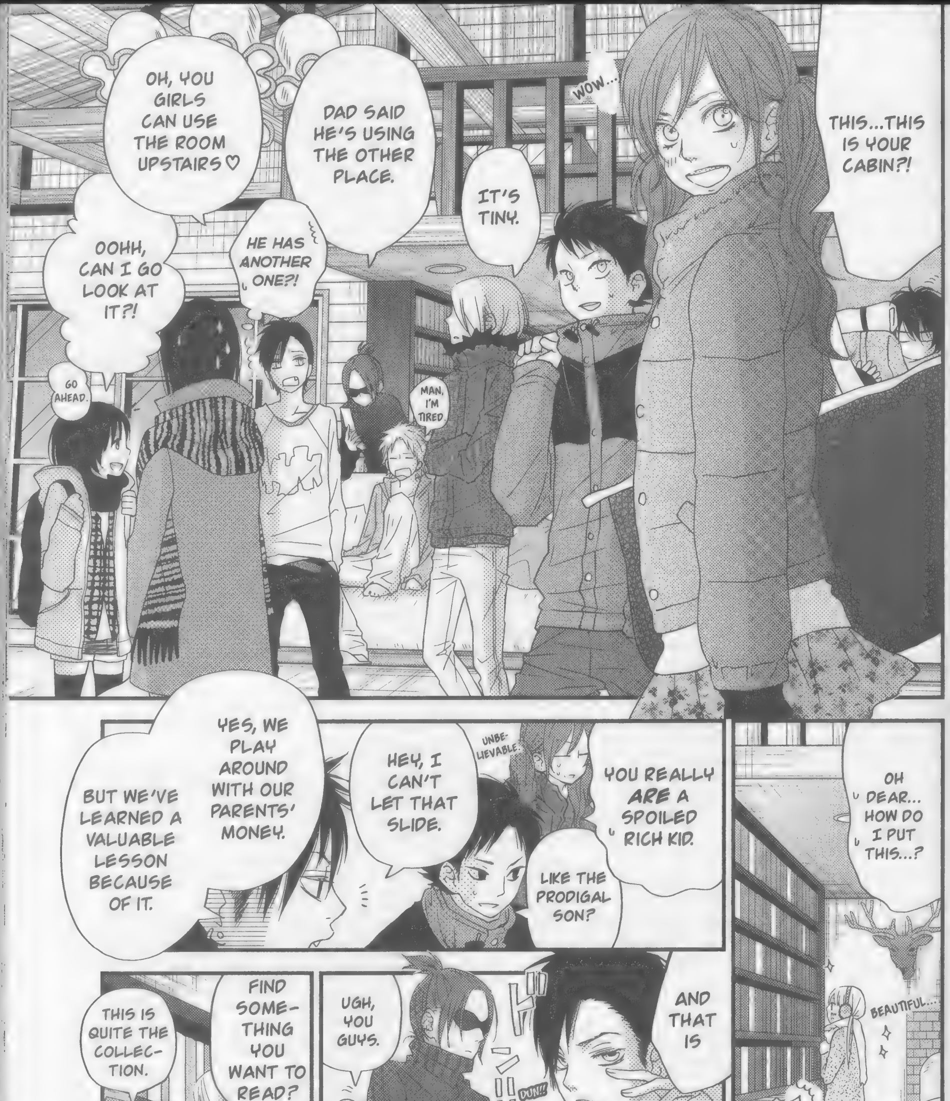

1589, START OF THE BOURBON DYNASTY.
1598, EDICT OF NANTES...
THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.
1615, THE ESTATES GENERAL STOPS MEETING...
I CAN'T EVEN STAND UP PROPERLY.
I KNOW HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK!
I READ A BOOK ABOUT IT BEFORE I CAME.
DRAINED
IF I'D KNOWN THIS WOULD HAPPEN, I WOULD HAVE BROUGHT ONE TEXTBOOK.
I'M REALLY GLAD I DIDN'T GO FOLLOW THEM DOWN.
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
HARU WAS HAVING PLENTY OF FUN, AFTER ALL.
MURMUR
MURMUR
NOTHING I DO EVER WORKS OUT.
...EXCEPT FOR STUDYING.
...1648, START OF THE FRONDE.
1685, EDICT OF NANTES IS REVOKED.
ZSH
HUH? MIZUTANI-SAN?
KREE
SASAYAN-KUN?
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU STILL DOING OVER THERE?
WHERE'S EVERYBODY ELSE?!

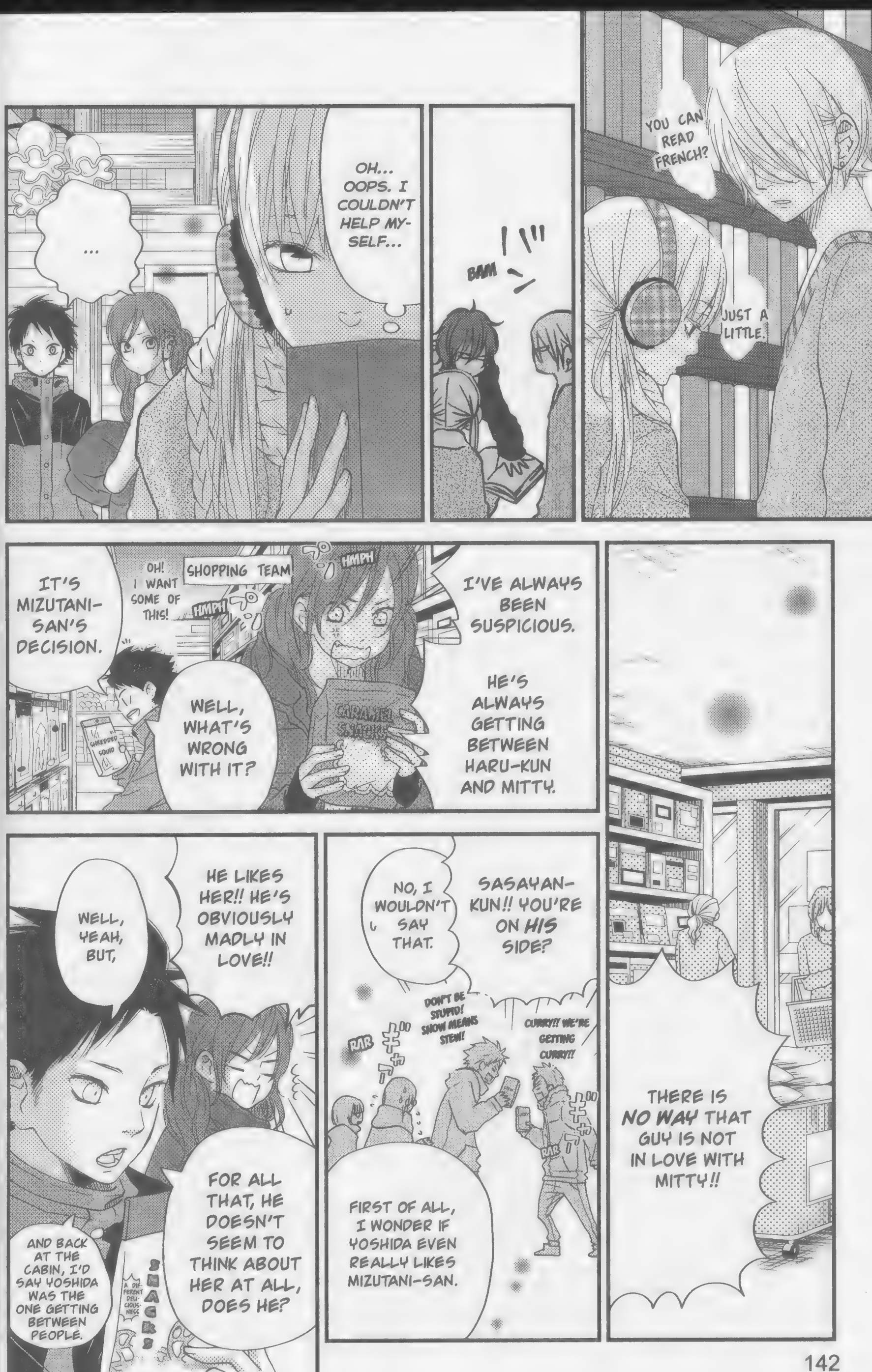

?
NO ONE'S BEEN HERE.
WHAT? IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE YOSHIDA WENT OFF AFTER THAT YAMAKEN GUY.
UGH, WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
OH, THAT'S TOO BAD FOR YAMAKEN-KUN. HARU'S REALLY JEALOUS OF HIM.
...IF SHE CAN FIGURE OUT THAT MUCH, HOW HAS SHE NOT FIGURED OUT THE MOST IMPORTANT PART?
SO, MIZUTANI-SAN. HAVE YOU BEEN PRACTICING HERE ALL THIS TIME?
YEAH.
I WAS JUST TAKING A LITTLE BREAK TO RECITE A TIMELINE.
YOU TAKE A BREAK BY STUDYING?!
I THINK YOU HAVE A PROBLEM.
HA HA HA.
ぱんぱん PAT PAT
WHEN I'M NOT STUDYING, I GET RESTLESS.
...OH YEAH, THIS IS A FIRST, HUH? YOU COMING SOMEWHERE WITHOUT ANY STUDY MATERIALS.
YEAH.
IF I BROUGHT STUFF TO STUDY, I WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE.
BRR
BRR
BUT TODAY, I CAME TO MAKE SURE HARU HAD A GOOD TIME.
WHY DO YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE HE HAS A GOOD TIME?
ZH
ZH
ZH
HUH?
WELL...
...I'VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING FOR HIM.

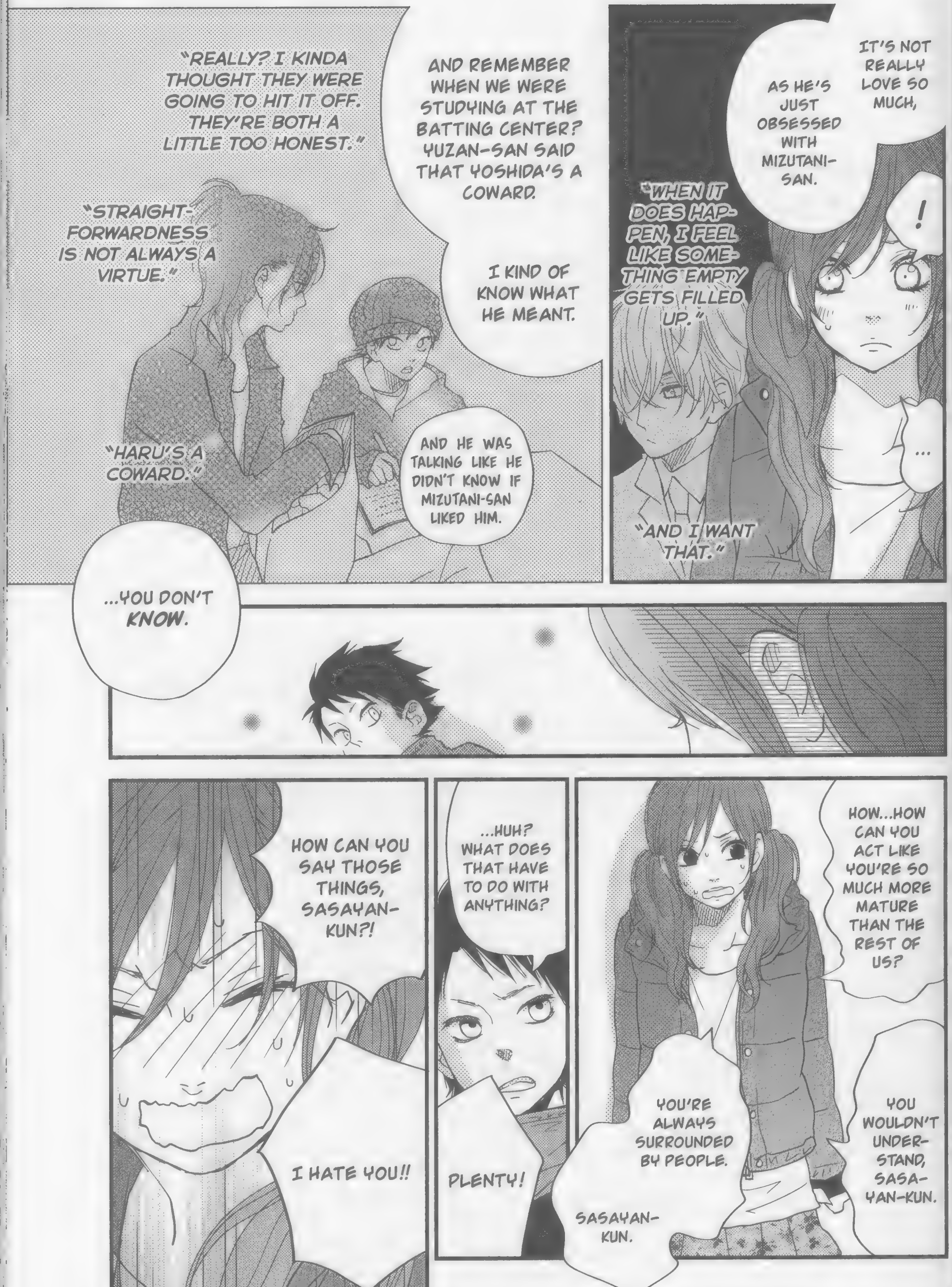

FIRST, WHEN YOU STAND UP, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A GOOD FOOTHOLD, LIKE THIS.
TREMBLE TREMBLE
HRNGH...!
GAH GAH
OH, THERE YOU ARE, MITTY!
LOOK WHAT I JUST RENTED!
I'M THE BEST! I'M A HERO!
HEY!
LET'S GO EAT ALREADY!
NOW WE CAN ALL PLAY TOGETHER!!
OKAY.
HUH? WHERE'S YOSHIDA?
WHAT? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM...
OH YEAH, AND YAMAKEN'S GONE, TOO.
JERK. DID HE RUN OFF WITH A GIRL AGAIN?
HUH?
THEN WHERE DID THEY...?
RAR
RAR
SERIOUSLY, HOW STUPID CAN YOU BE? I THOUGHT I WAS GONNA DIE!!
ZSH
ZSH
SHUT UP! IT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T WANDERED OFF!
RAR
RAR
ZSH
ZSH
WHO WOULD DO THAT?!
ZSH
ZSH
SHUT UP! IT WAS JUST A BEAR!!
DROP
ZSH

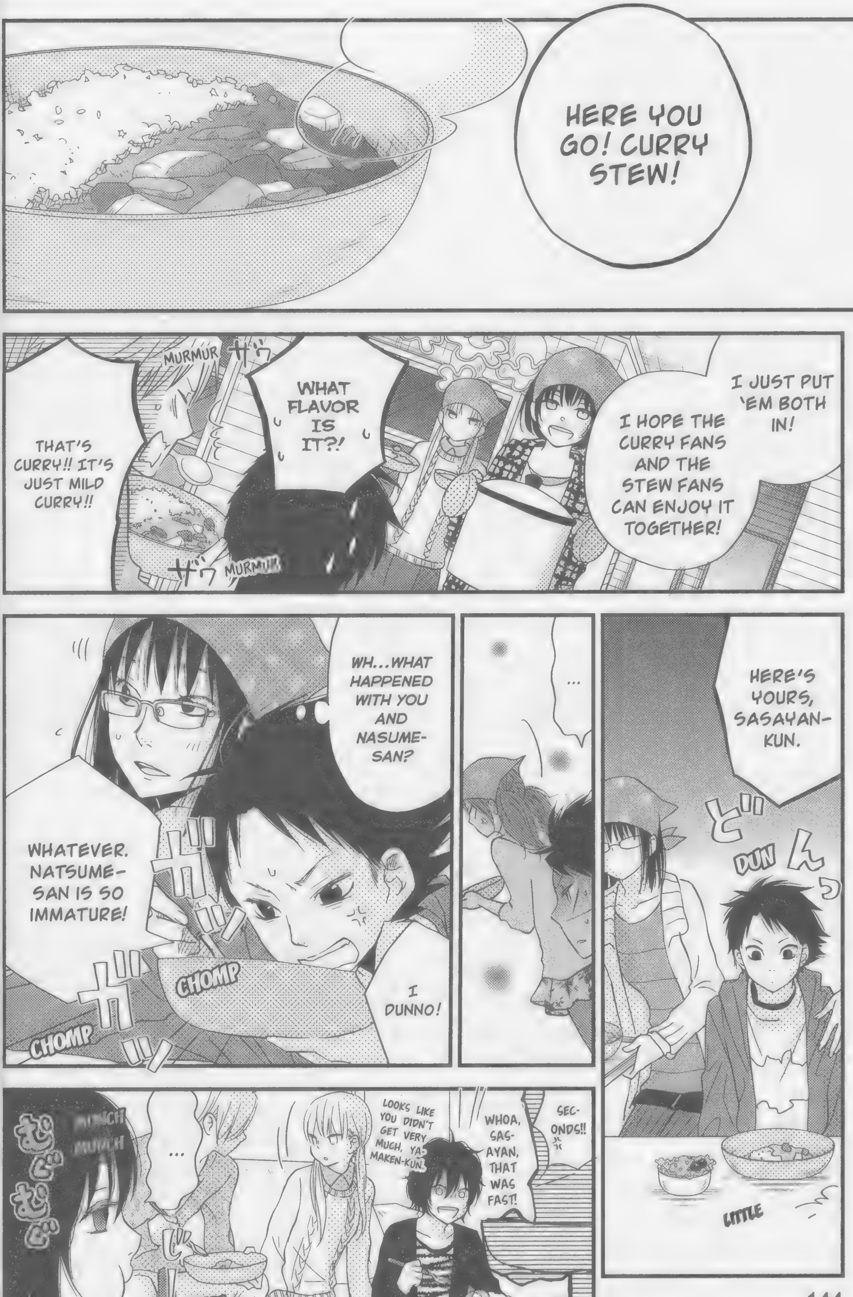

...
I FIGURE I COULD...
...MAKE HIM HAPPY ONCE IN A WHILE.
THE BEST WAY TO MAKE YOSHIDA HAPPY...
...IS TO HAVE FUN YOURSELF.
FSHH
JAH
...YOU WANT HIM TO LIKE YOU?
WELL...
YEAH.
FOR NOW,
LET'S MAKE IT SO YOU CAN SNOWBOARD TOGETHER.
GRIN
YEAH.

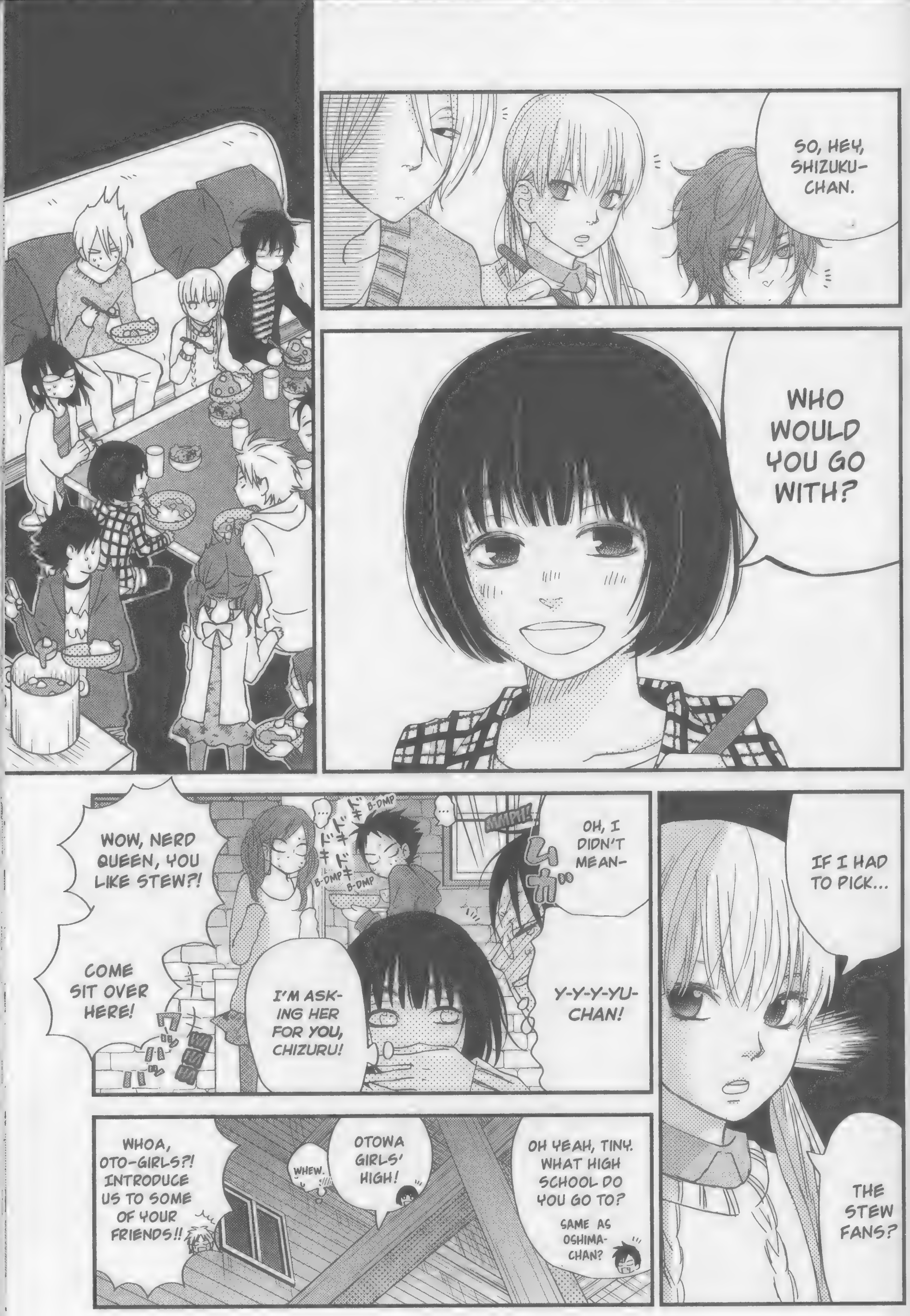

...
WHAT WERE YOU GUYS DOING...?
GETTING STRANDED.
THANKS TO HIM.
KONK!!
YOU MADE IT WORSE!!

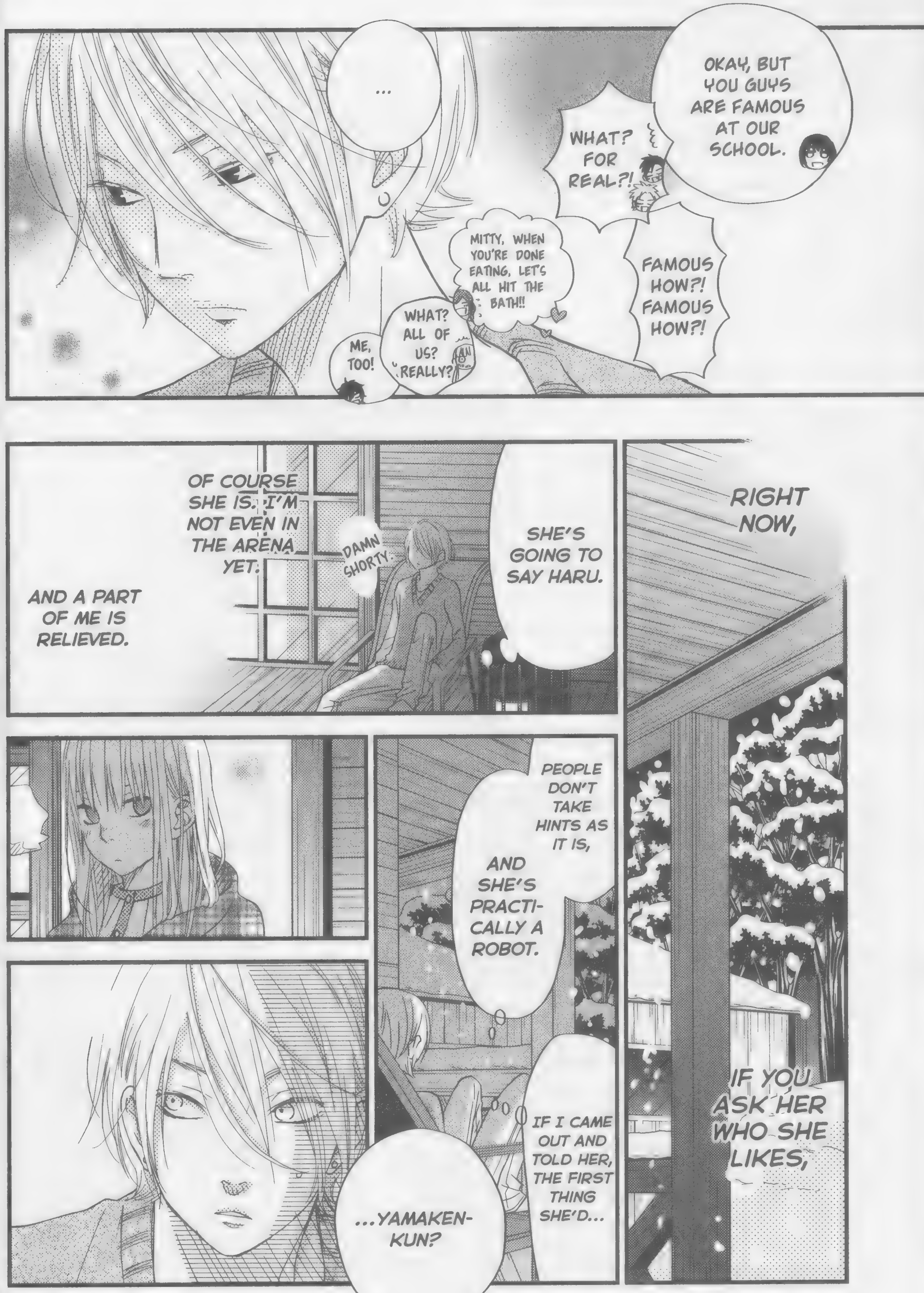

THIS...THIS IS YOUR CABIN?!
WOW...
IT'S TINY.
DAD SAID HE'S USING THE OTHER PLACE.
OH, YOU GIRLS CAN USE THE ROOM UPSTAIRS ♡
HE HAS ANOTHER ONE?!
OOHH, CAN I GO LOOK AT IT?!
MAN, I'M TIRED.
GO AHEAD.
OH DEAR... HOW DO I PUT THIS...?
BEAUTIFUL...
CHIZURU, THE BATH! THERE'S AN OPEN-AIR BATH! THERE'S AN OPEN-AIR BATH!
WHAT? WOW, YOU'RE RIGHT!
YOU REALLY ARE A SPOILED RICH KID.
UNBELIEVABLE.
LIKE THE PRODIGAL SON?
HEY, I CAN'T LET THAT SLIDE.
YES, WE PLAY AROUND WITH OUR PARENTS' MONEY.
BUT WE'VE LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON BECAUSE OF IT.
AND THAT IS
DUN!!
MONEY CANNOT MAKE GIRLS LIKE YOU!
UGH, YOU GUYS.
FIND SOMETHING YOU WANT TO READ?
THIS IS QUITE THE COLLECTION.
IT'S JUST FOR SHOW.

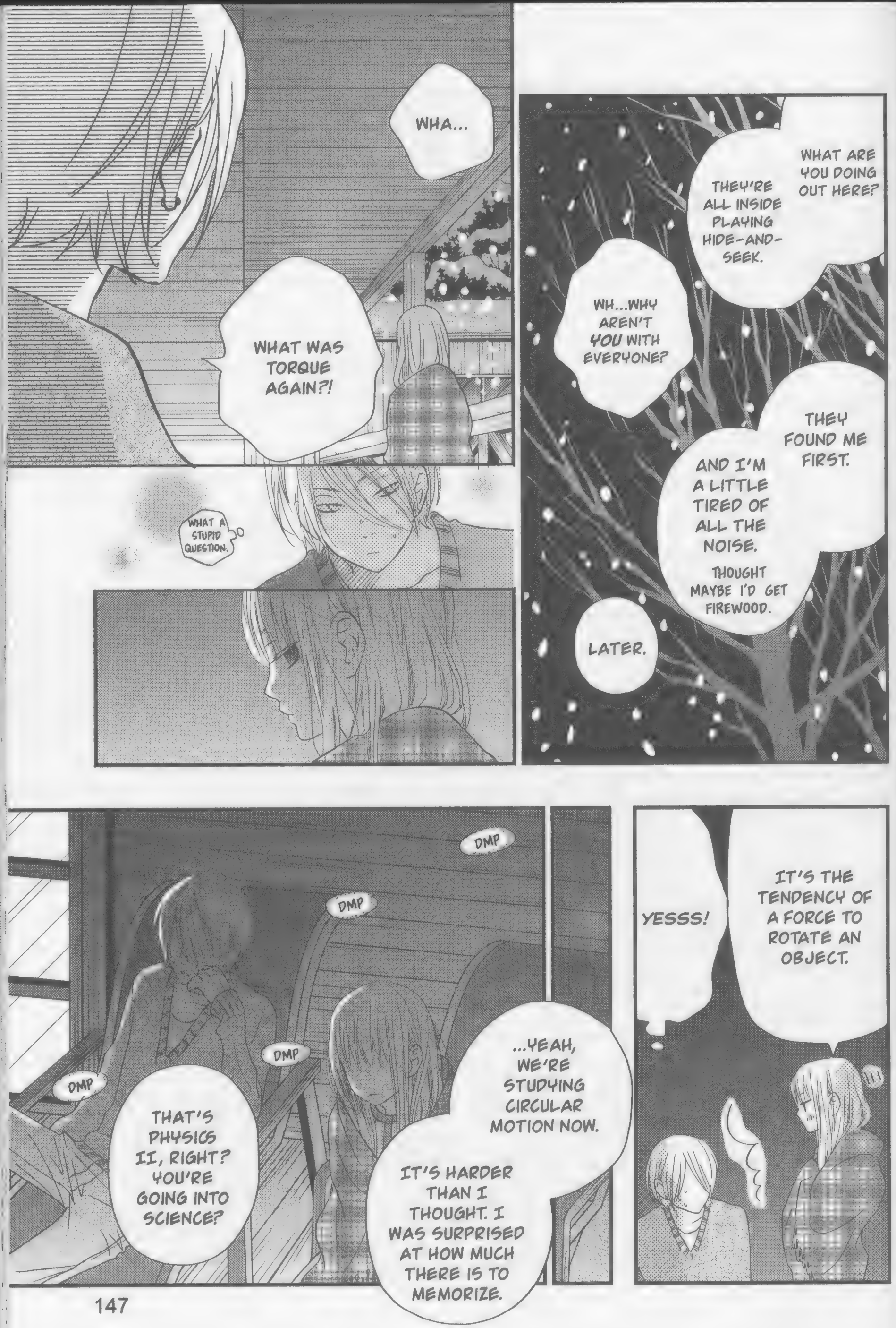

YOU CAN READ FRENCH?
JUST A LITTLE.
BAM
!!
OH... OOPS. I COULDN'T HELP MY-SELF...
...
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SUSPICIOUS.
HE'S ALWAYS GETTING BETWEEN HARU-KUN AND MITTY.
SHOPPING TEAM
HMPH
HMPH
CARAMEL SNACKS
OH! I WANT SOME OF THIS!
SHREDDED SQUID
IT'S MIZUTANI-SAN'S DECISION.
WELL, WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?
THERE IS NO WAY THAT GUY IS NOT IN LOVE WITH MITTY!!
SASAYAN-KUN!! YOU'RE ON HIS SIDE?
NO, I WOULDN'T SAY THAT.
CURRY!! WE'RE GETTING CURRY!!
DON'T BE STUPID! SNOW MEANS STEW!
RAR
RAR
FIRST OF ALL, I WONDER IF YOSHIDA EVEN REALLY LIKES MIZUTANI-SAN.
HE LIKES HER!! HE'S OBVIOUSLY MADLY IN LOVE!!
WELL, YEAH, BUT,
FOR ALL THAT, HE DOESN'T SEEM TO THINK ABOUT HER AT ALL, DOES HE?
AND BACK AT THE CABIN, I'D SAY YOSHIDA WAS THE ONE GETTING BETWEEN PEOPLE.
SNACKS
A DIFFERENT DELICIOUSNESS
SALAMI

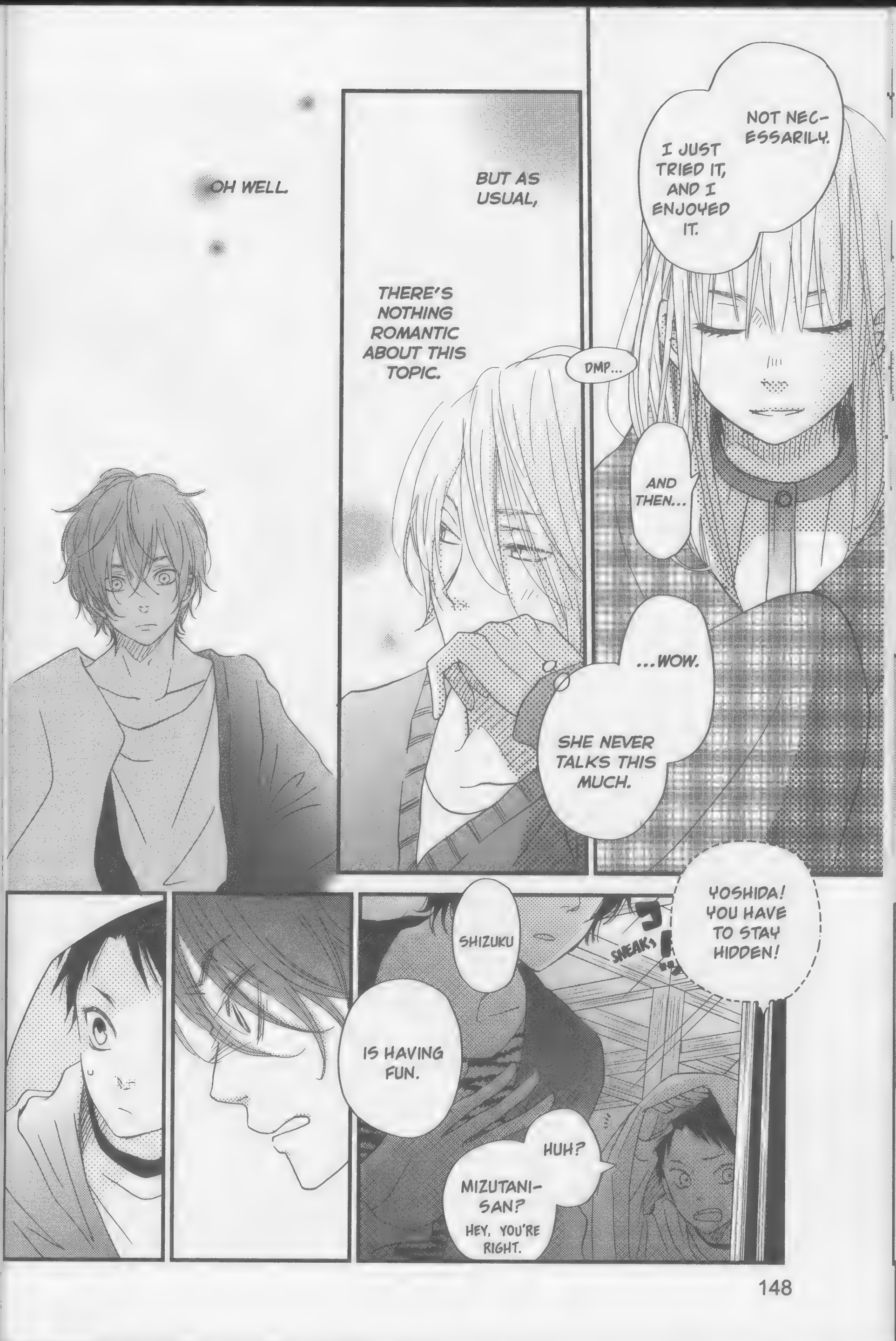

IT'S NOT REALLY LOVE SO MUCH,
AS HE'S JUST OBSESSED WITH MIZUTANI-SAN.
!
"WHEN IT DOES HAPPEN, I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING EMPTY GETS FILLED UP."
"AND I WANT THAT."
...
AND REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE STUDYING AT THE BATTING CENTER? YUZAN-SAN SAID THAT YOSHIDA'S A COWARD.
I KIND OF KNOW WHAT HE MEANT.
"REALLY? I KINDA THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO HIT IT OFF. THEY'RE BOTH A LITTLE TOO HONEST."
"STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS IS NOT ALWAYS A VIRTUE."
AND HE WAS TALKING LIKE HE DIDN'T KNOW IF MIZUTANI-SAN LIKED HIM.
"HARU'S A COWARD."
...YOU DON'T KNOW.
HOW...HOW CAN YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE SO MUCH MORE MATURE THAN THE REST OF US?
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND, SASAYAN-KUN.
YOU'RE ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE.
...HUH? WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?
PLENTY!
SASAYAN-KUN.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THOSE THINGS, SASAYAN-KUN?!
I HATE YOU!!

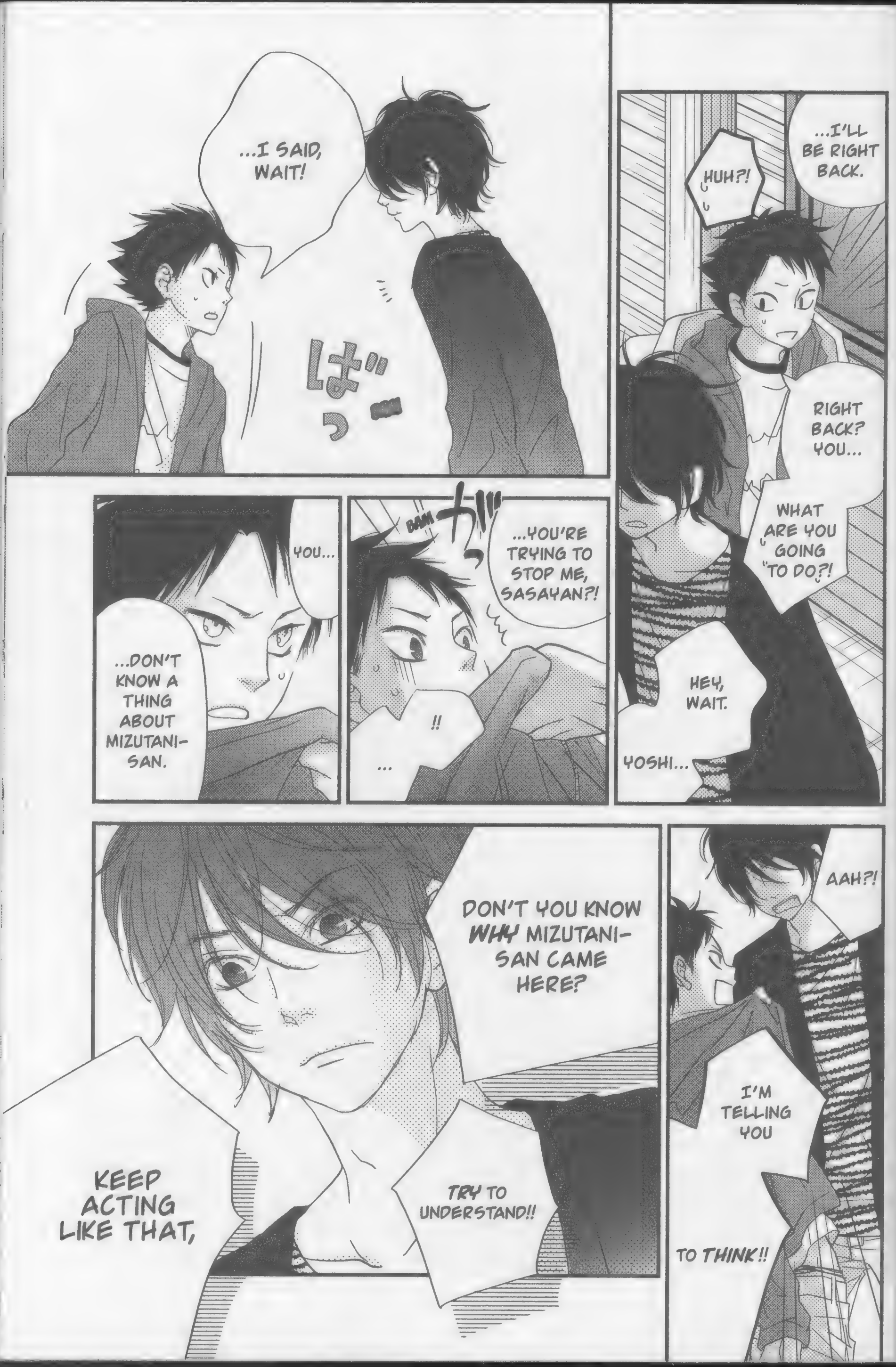

HERE YOU GO! CURRY STEW!
I JUST PUT 'EM BOTH IN!
I HOPE THE CURRY FANS AND THE STEW FANS CAN ENJOY IT TOGETHER!
WHAT FLAVOR IS IT?!
MURMUR ザワ
THAT'S CURRY!! IT'S JUST MILD CURRY!!
ザワ MURMUR
HERE'S YOURS, SASAYAN-KUN.
どんっ DUN
LITTLE
...
WH...WHAT HAPPENED WITH YOU AND NASUME-SAN?
WHATEVER. NATSUME-SAN IS SO IMMATURE!
ガッ ガッ CHOMP CHOMP
I DUNNO!
SEC-ONDS!!
WHOA, SAS-AYAN, THAT WAS FAST!
LOOKS LIKE YOU DIDN'T GET VERY MUCH, YAMAKEN-KUN.
...
むぐむぐ MUNCH MUNCH
じー STARE

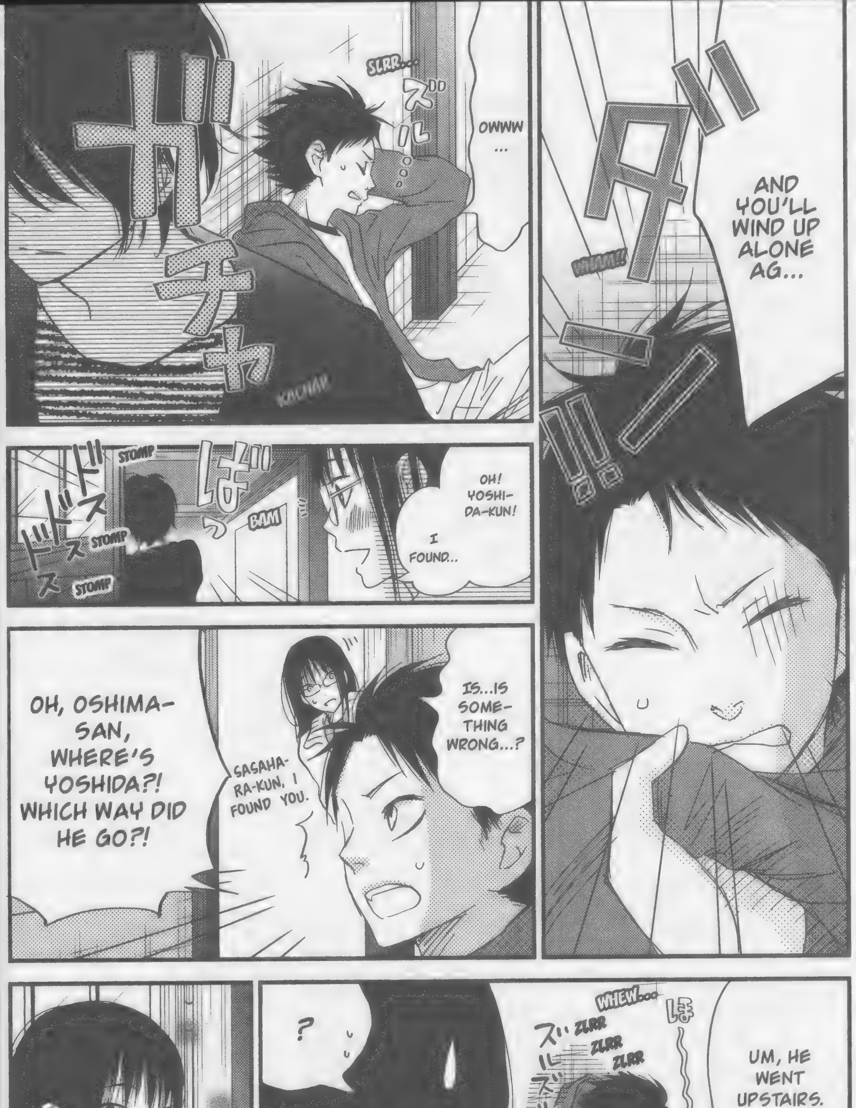

SO, HEY, SHIZUKU-CHAN.
WHO WOULD YOU GO WITH?
IF I HAD TO PICK...
THE STEW FANS?
OH, I DIDN'T MEAN-
ムカ AMPH!
Y-Y-Y-YU-CHAN!
I'M ASKING HER FOR YOU, CHIZURU!
ドキドキ B-DMP B-DMP
WOW, NERD QUEEN, YOU LIKE STEW?!
COME SIT OVER HERE!
OH YEAH, TINY. WHAT HIGH SCHOOL DO YOU GO TO?
SAME AS OSHIMA-CHAN?
OTOWA GIRLS' HIGH!
WHEW.
WHOA, OTO-GIRLS?! INTRODUCE US TO SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS!!

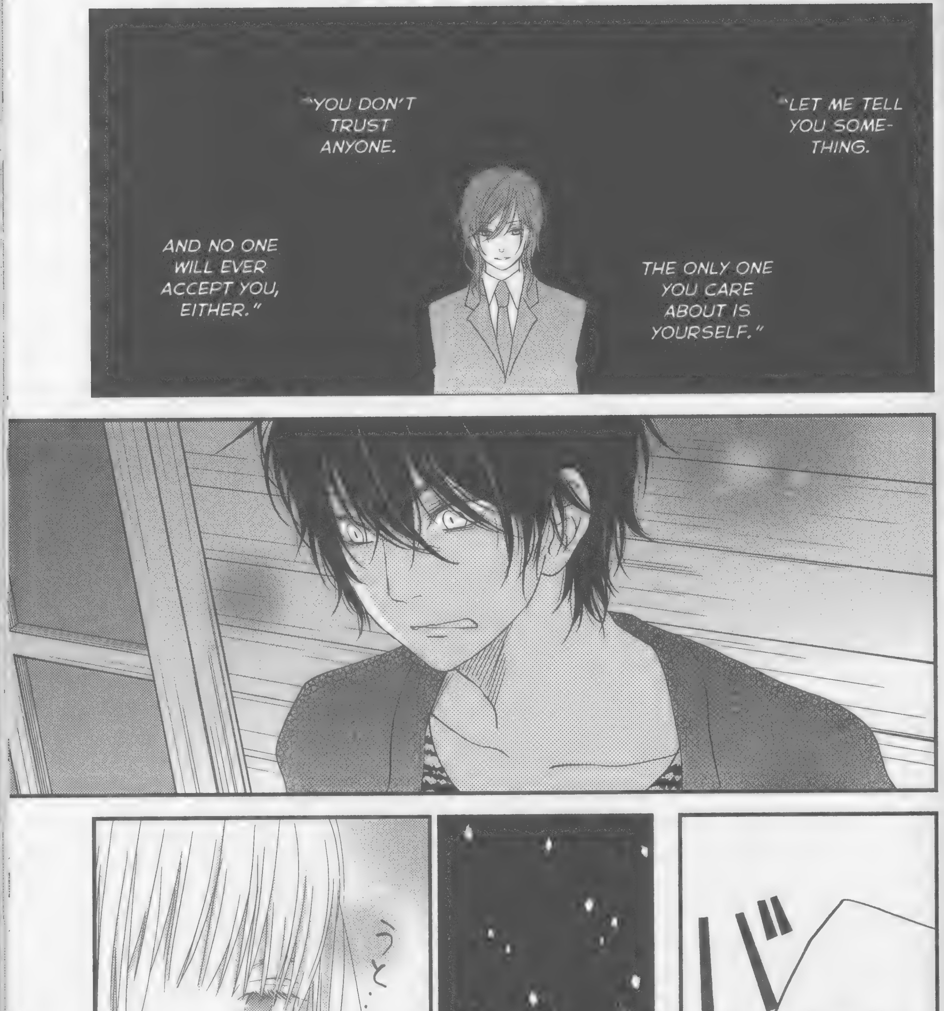

OKAY, BUT YOU GUYS ARE FAMOUS AT OUR SCHOOL.
WHAT? FOR REAL?!
...
FAMOUS HOW?! FAMOUS HOW?!
MITTY, WHEN YOU'RE DONE EATING, LET'S ALL HIT THE BATH!!
WHAT? ALL OF US? REALLY?
ME, TOO!
RIGHT NOW,
SHE'S GOING TO SAY HARU.
DAMN SHORTY.
OF COURSE SHE IS. I'M NOT EVEN IN THE ARENA YET.
AND A PART OF ME IS RELIEVED.
IF YOU ASK HER WHO SHE LIKES,
PEOPLE DON'T TAKE HINTS AS IT IS,
AND SHE'S PRACTICALLY A ROBOT.
IF I CAME OUT AND TOLD HER, THE FIRST THING SHE'D...
...YAMAKEN-KUN?

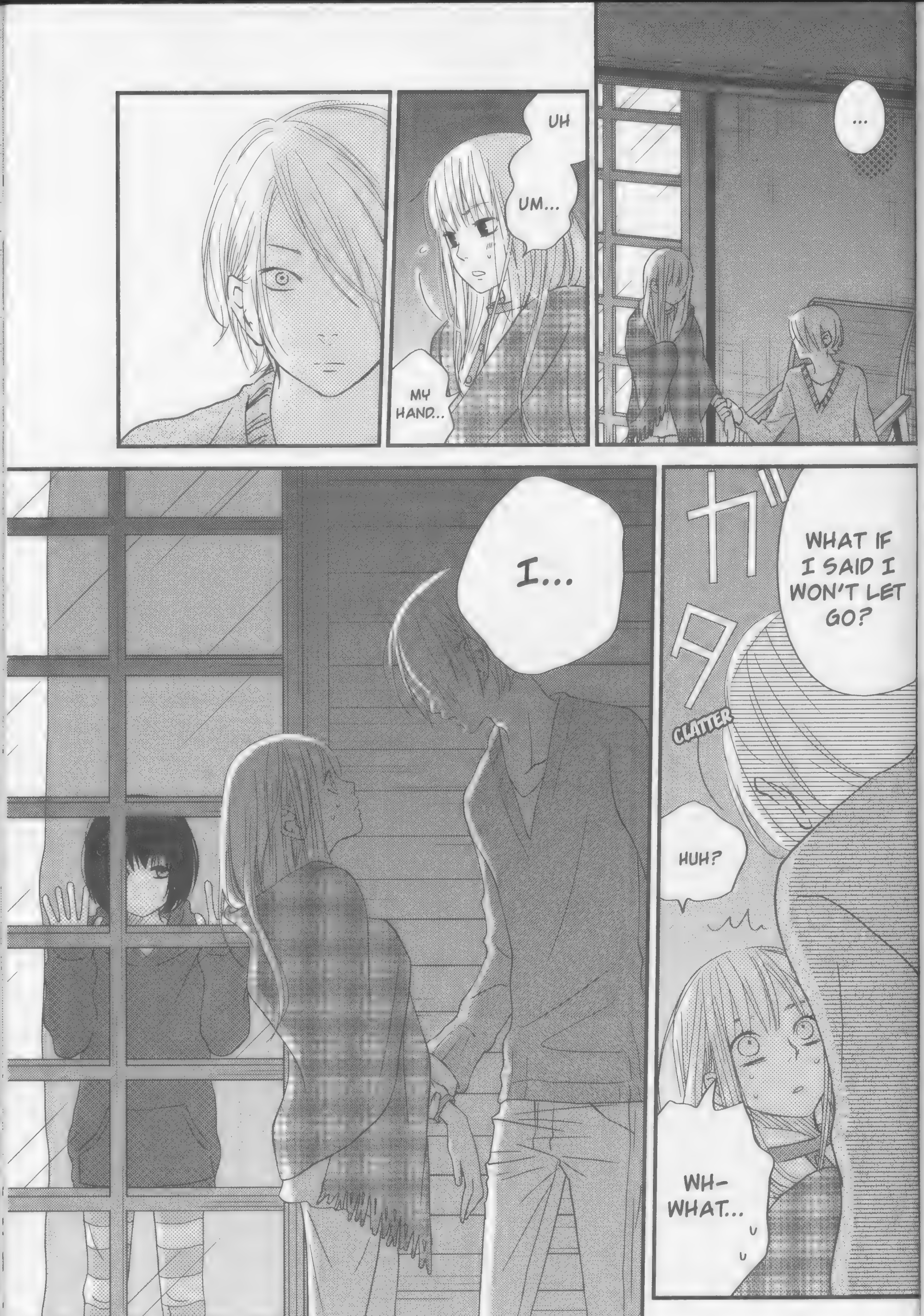

WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?
THEY'RE ALL INSIDE PLAYING HIDE-AND-SEEK.
WH...WHY AREN'T YOU WITH EVERYONE?
THEY FOUND ME FIRST.
AND I'M A LITTLE TIRED OF ALL THE NOISE.
THOUGHT MAYBE I'D GET FIREWOOD.
LATER.
WHA...
WHAT WAS TORQUE AGAIN?!
WHAT A STUPID QUESTION.
IT'S THE TENDENCY OF A FORCE TO ROTATE AN OBJECT.
YESSS!
...YEAH, WE'RE STUDYING CIRCULAR MOTION NOW.
IT'S HARDER THAN I THOUGHT. I WAS SURPRISED AT HOW MUCH THERE IS TO MEMORIZE.
DMP
DMP
DMP
DMP
THAT'S PHYSICS II, RIGHT? YOU'RE GOING INTO SCIENCE?

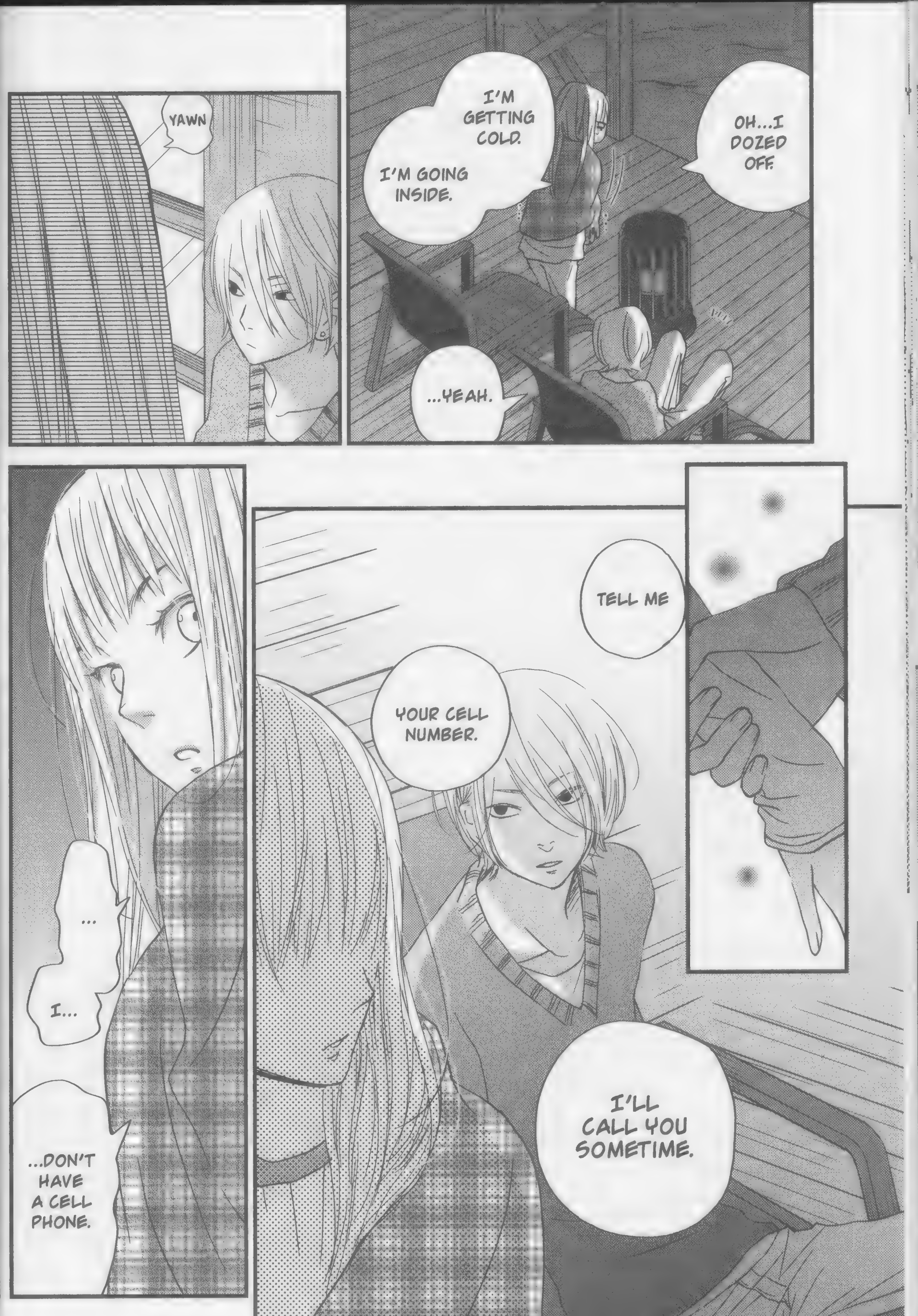

NOT NECESSARILY.
I JUST TRIED IT, AND I ENJOYED IT.
DMP...
AND THEN...
...WOW.
SHE NEVER TALKS THIS MUCH.
BUT AS USUAL,
THERE'S NOTHING ROMANTIC ABOUT THIS TOPIC.
OH WELL.
YOSHIDA! YOU HAVE TO STAY HIDDEN!
SNEAK
HUH?
MIZUTANI-SAN? HEY, YOU'RE RIGHT.
SHIZUKU
IS HAVING FUN.

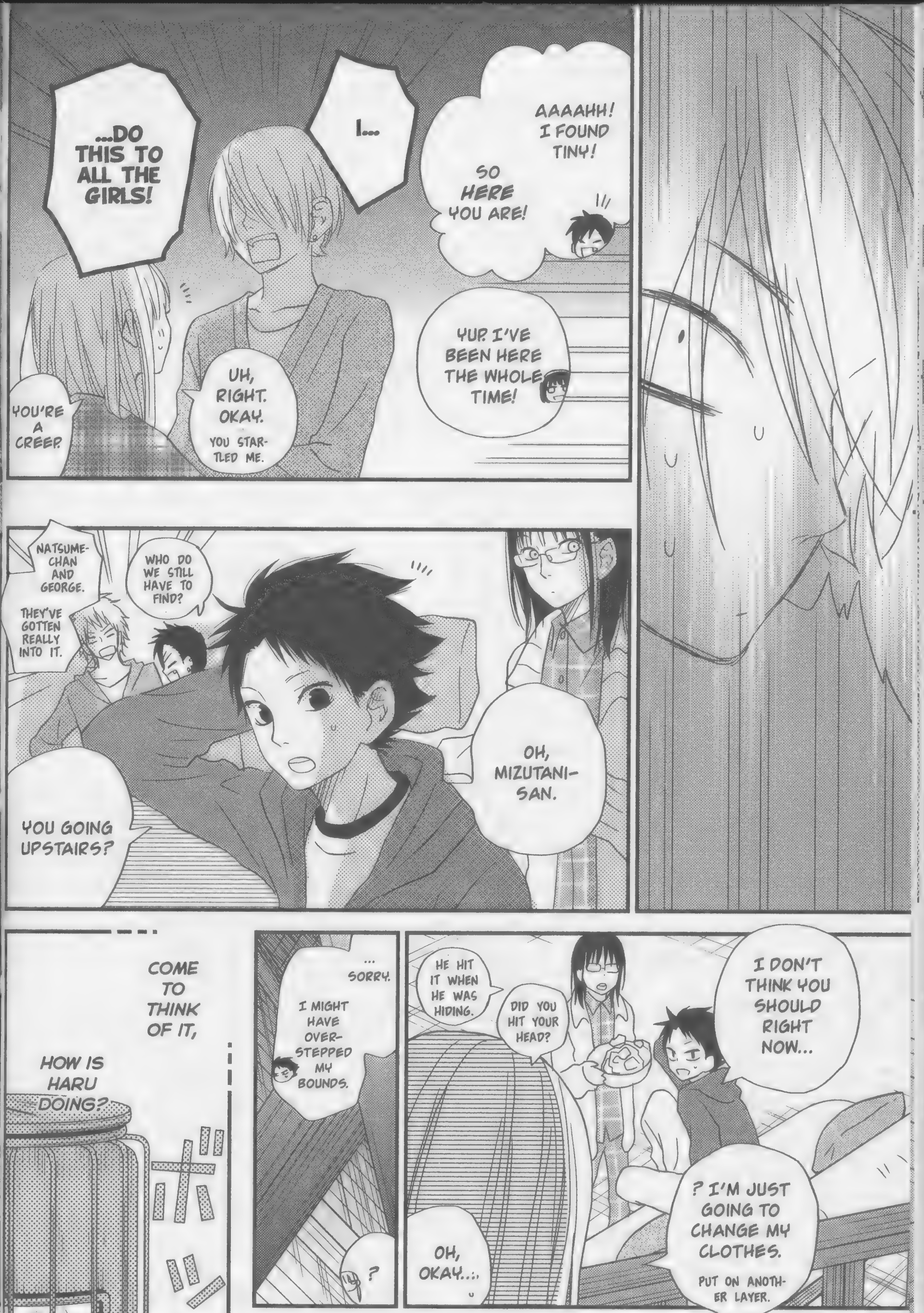

...I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
HUH?!
RIGHT BACK? YOU...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?!
HEY, WAIT.
YOSHI...
...I SAID, WAIT!
ばっ
BAM ガッ
...YOU'RE TRYING TO STOP ME, SASAYAN?!
!!
...
YOU...
...DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT MIZUTANI-SAN.
AAH?!
I'M TELLING YOU
TO THINK!!
DON'T YOU KNOW WHY MIZUTANI-SAN CAME HERE?
TRY TO UNDERSTAND!!
KEEP ACTING LIKE THAT,

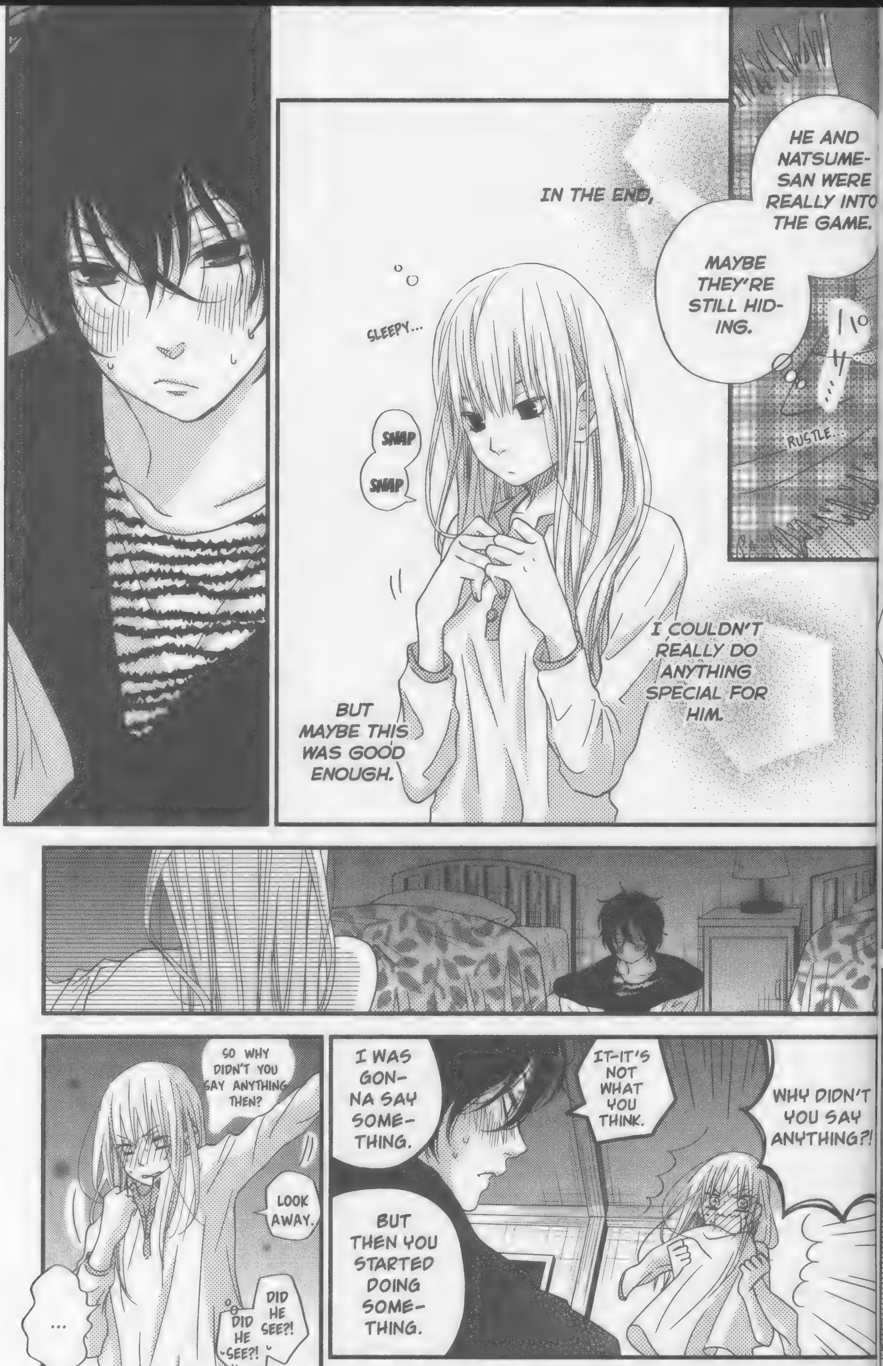

AND YOU'LL WIND UP ALONE AG...
ダッ
WHAM!!
ガチャ
KACHAP
ズル...
SLRR...
OWWW...
ドスドスドス
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
ばっ
BAM
OH! YOSHIDA-KUN! I FOUND...
IS...IS SOMETHING WRONG...?
SASAHARA-KUN, I FOUND YOU.
OH, OSHIMA-SAN, WHERE'S YOSHIDA?! WHICH WAY DID HE GO?!
UM, HE WENT UPSTAIRS.
ほ〜
WHEW...
ズルズルズル
ZLRR
ZLRR
ZLRR
OH...
MAN, THAT SCARED ME.
?
...

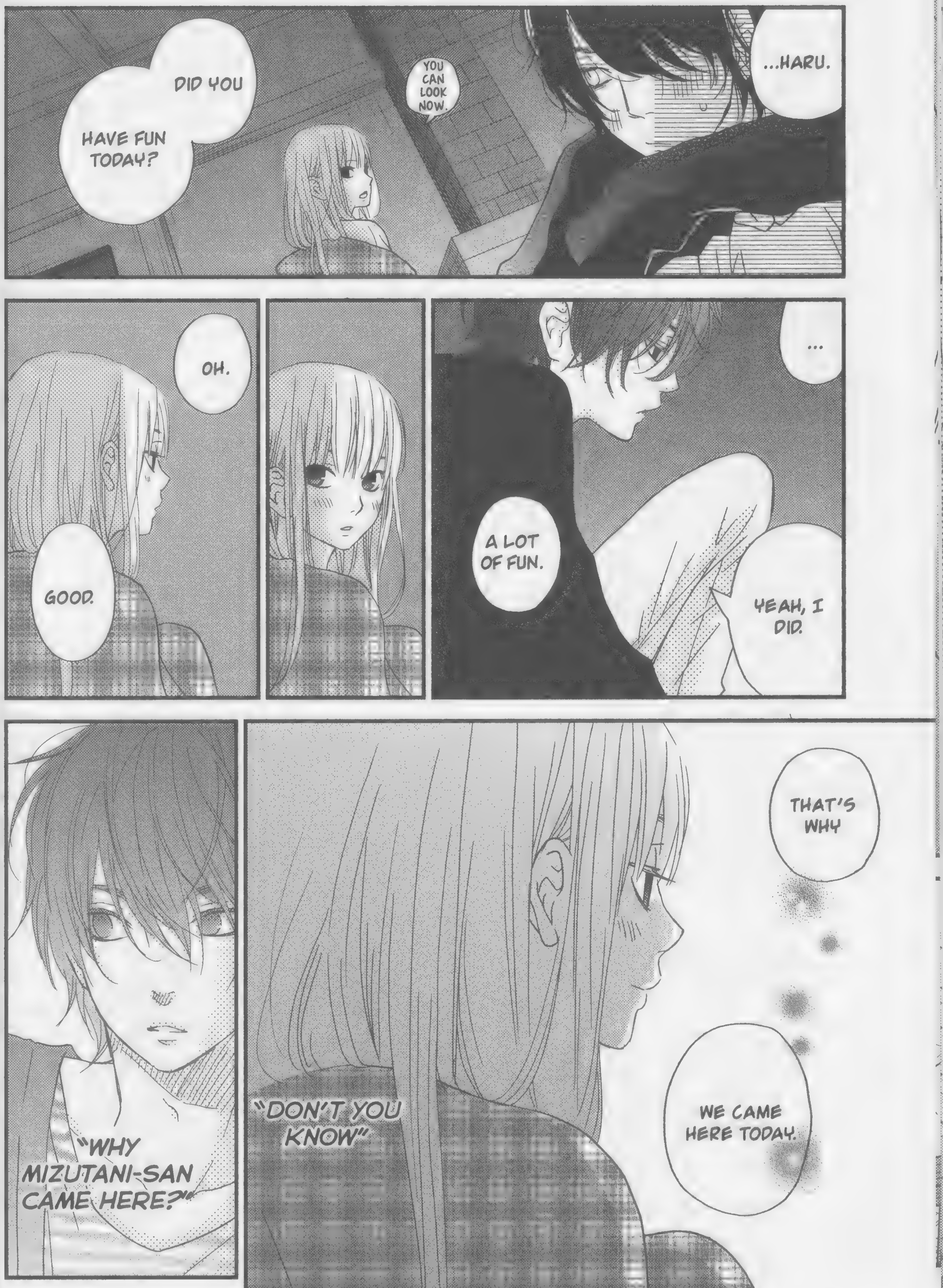

"LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING.
THE ONLY ONE YOU CARE ABOUT IS YOURSELF."
"YOU DON'T TRUST ANYONE.
AND NO ONE WILL EVER ACCEPT YOU, EITHER."
バキッ
SNAP
DAMMIT!
うと...
DOZE...
...

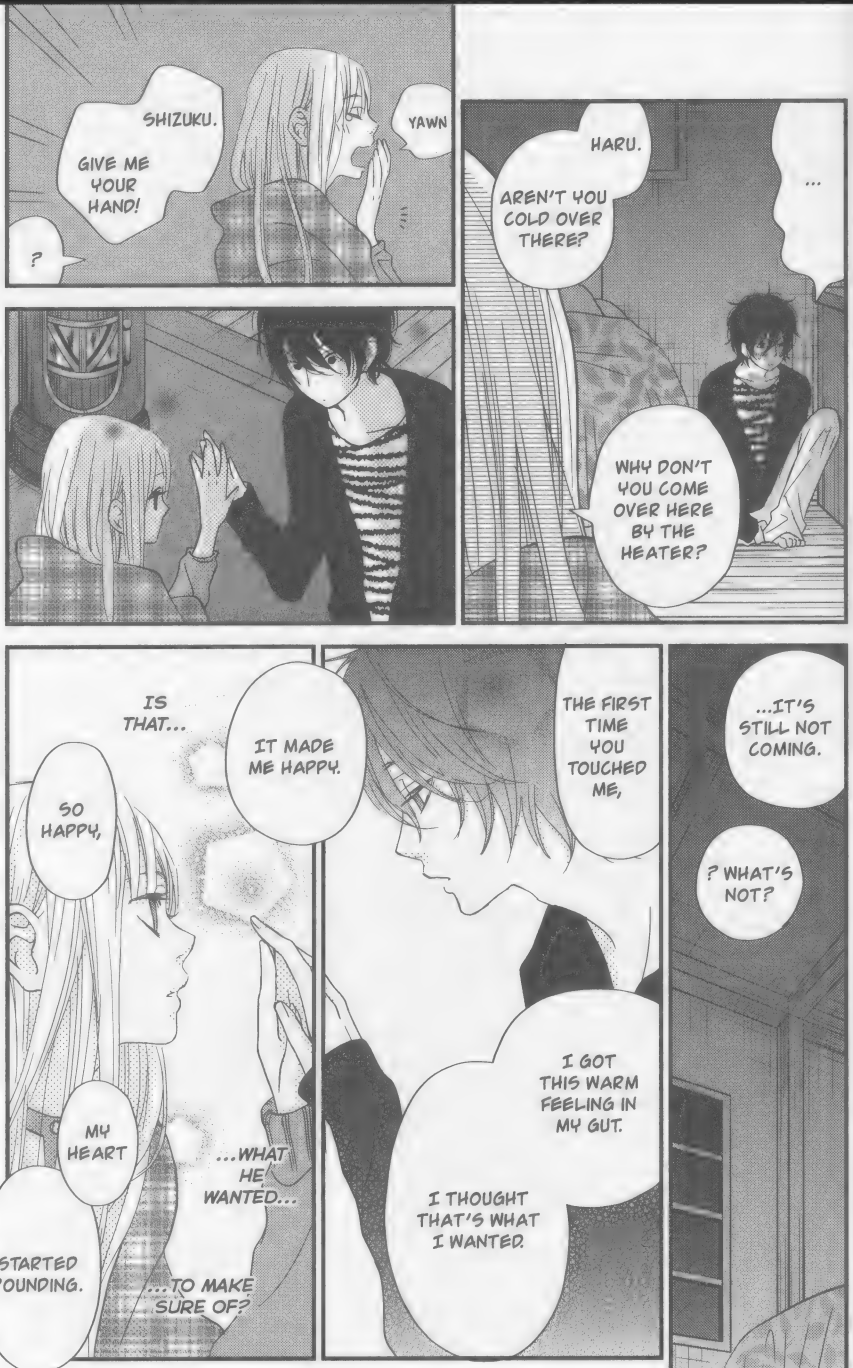

...
UH
UM...
MY HAND...
WHAT IF I SAID I WON'T LET GO?
ガタ
CLATTER
HUH?
WH-WHAT...
I...

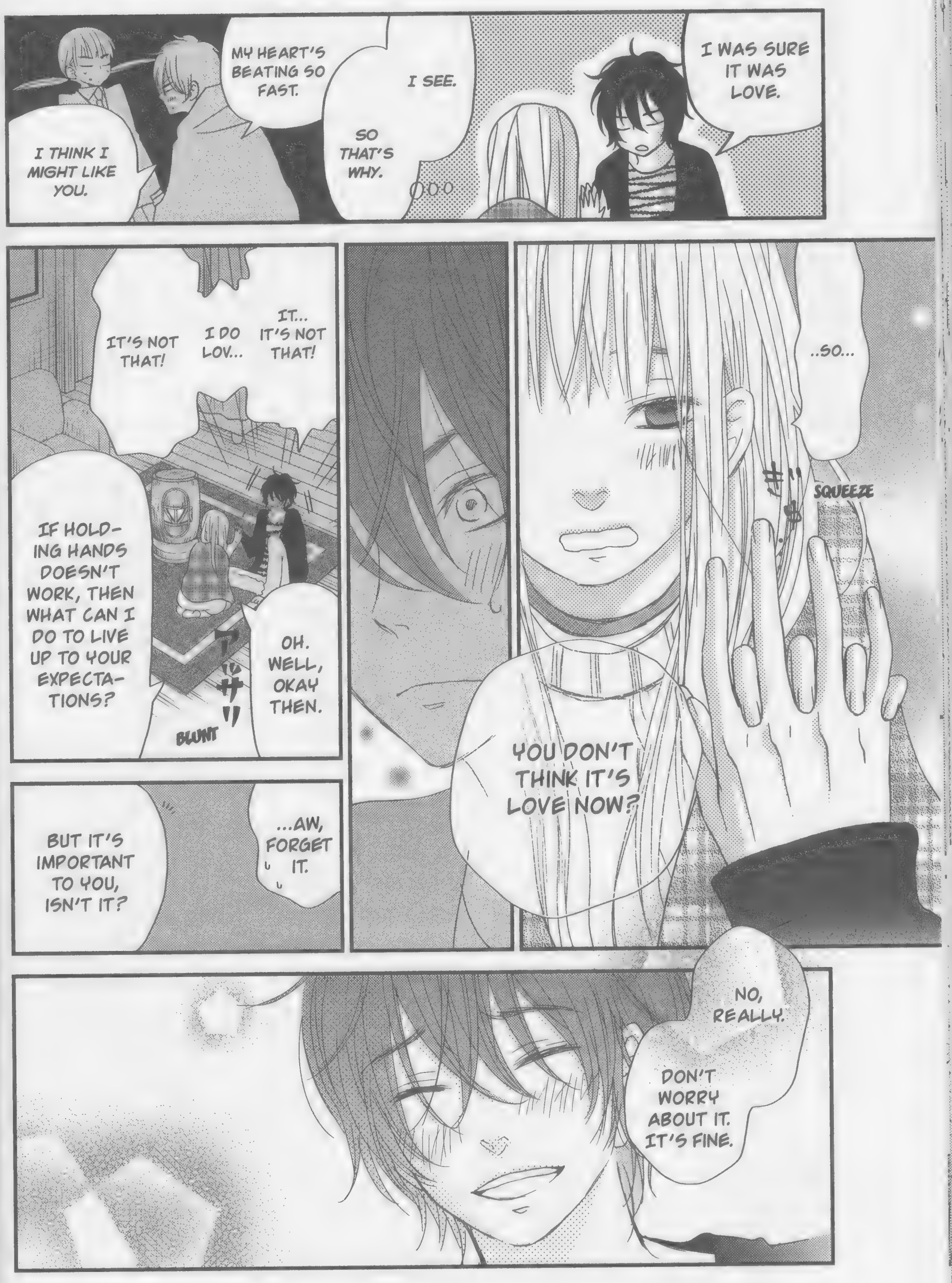

OH...I DOZED OFF.
I'M GETTING COLD.
I'M GOING INSIDE.
...YEAH.
YAWN
TELL ME
YOUR CELL NUMBER.
...
I...
...DON'T HAVE A CELL PHONE.
I'LL CALL YOU SOMETIME.

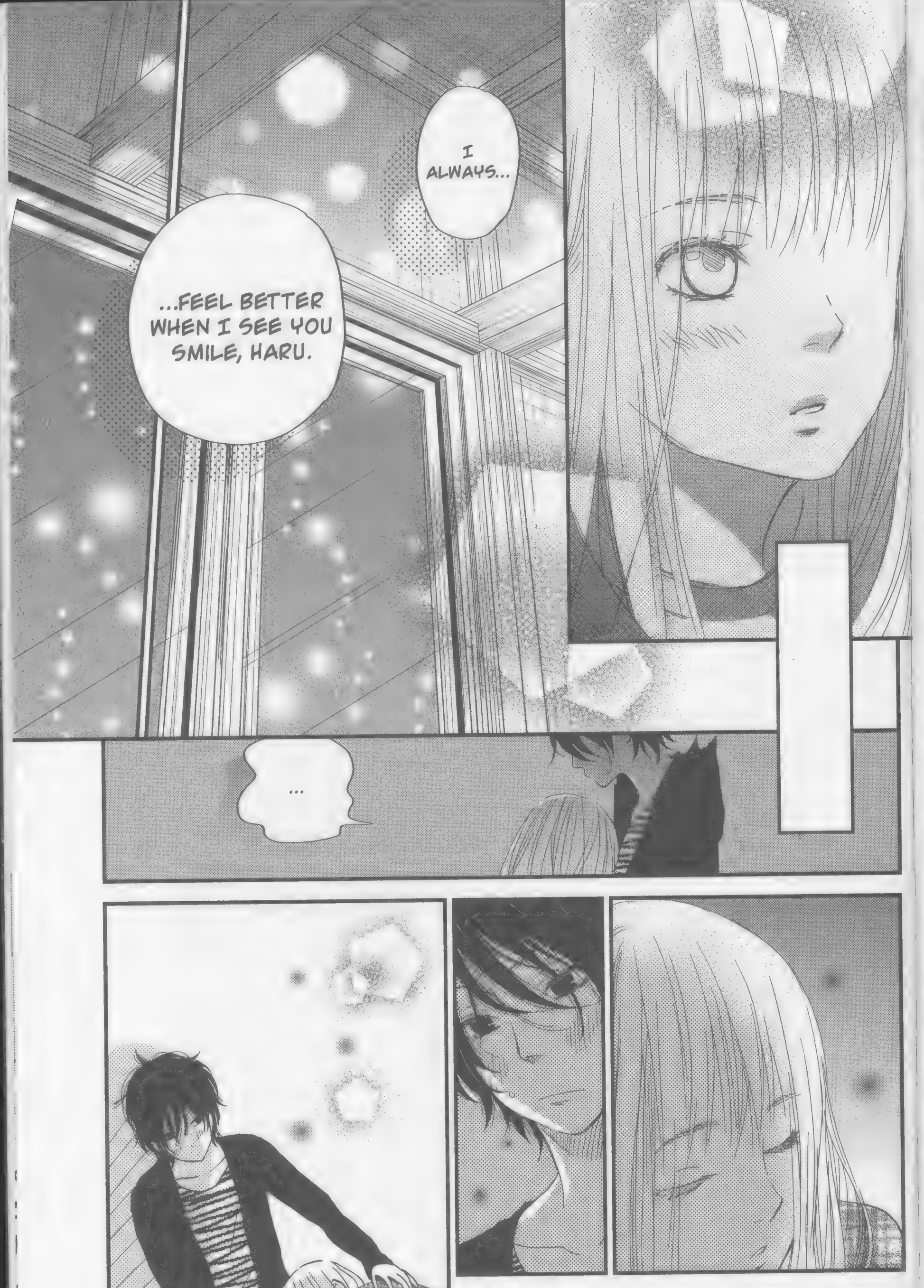

AAAAHH! I FOUND TINY!
SO HERE YOU ARE!
YUP. I'VE BEEN HERE THE WHOLE TIME!
I...
...DO THIS TO ALL THE GIRLS!
UH, RIGHT. OKAY.
YOU STARTLED ME.
YOU'RE A CREEP.
OH, MIZUTANI-SAN.
WHO DO WE STILL HAVE TO FIND?
NATSUME-CHAN AND GEORGE.
THEY'VE GOTTEN REALLY INTO IT.
YOU GOING UPSTAIRS?
I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD RIGHT NOW...
HE HIT IT WHEN HE WAS HIDING.
DID YOU HIT YOUR HEAD?
? I'M JUST GOING TO CHANGE MY CLOTHES.
PUT ON ANOTHER LAYER.
...SORRY.
I MIGHT HAVE OVERSTEPPED MY BOUNDS.
OH, OKAY...
?
COME TO THINK OF IT,
HOW IS HARU DOING?

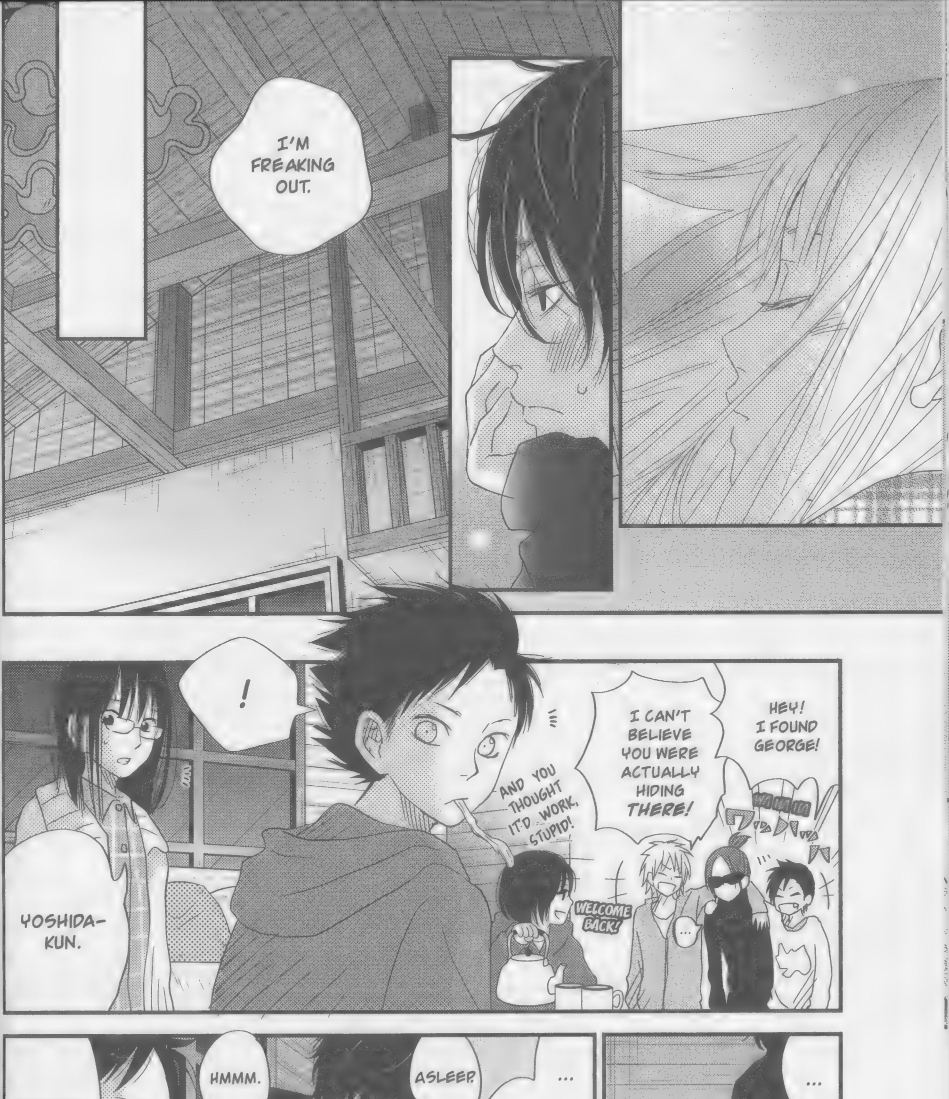

IN THE END,
HE AND NATSUME-SAN WERE REALLY INTO THE GAME.
MAYBE THEY'RE STILL HIDING.
RUSTLE
SLEEPY...
SNAP
SNAP
I COULDN'T REALLY DO ANYTHING SPECIAL FOR HIM.
BUT MAYBE THIS WAS GOOD ENOUGH.
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING?!
IT-IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK.
I WAS GONNA SAY SOMETHING.
BUT THEN YOU STARTED DOING SOMETHING.
SO WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING THEN?
LOOK AWAY.
DID HE SEE?!
DID HE SEE?!
...

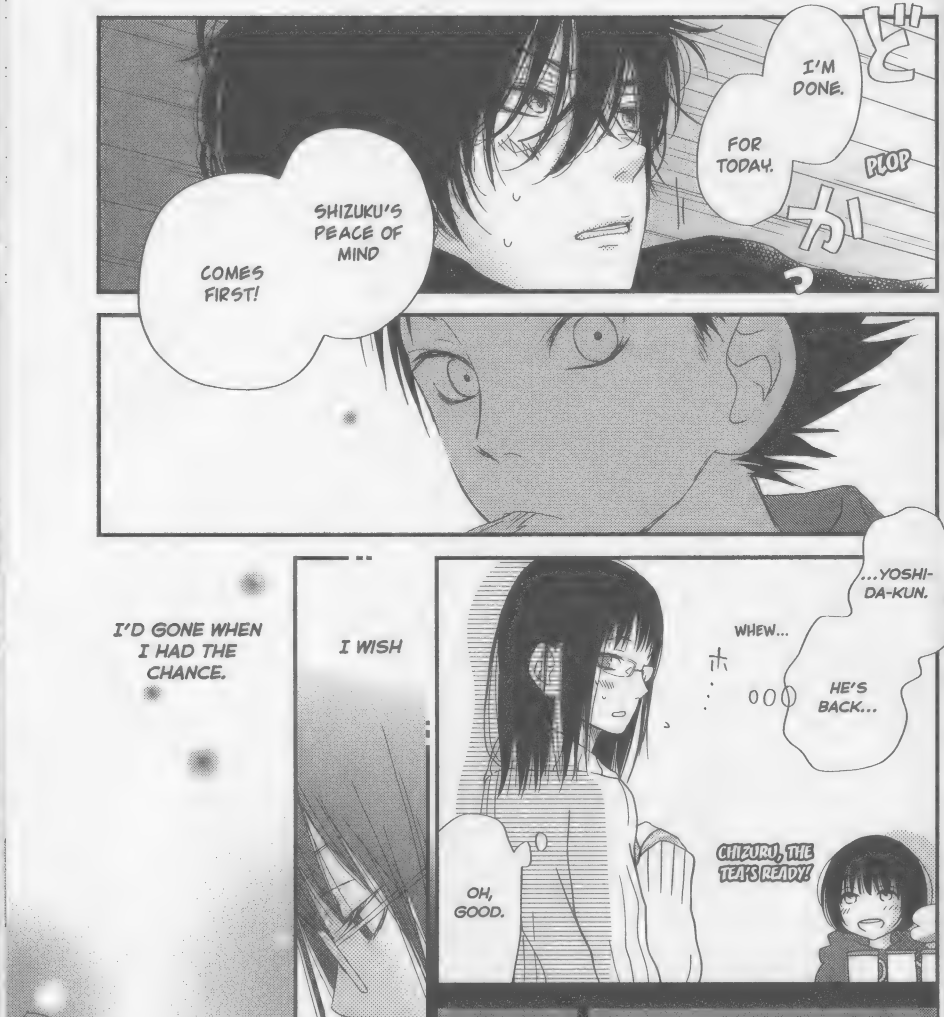

...HARU.
YOU CAN LOOK NOW.
DID YOU HAVE FUN TODAY?
...
A LOT OF FUN.
YEAH, I DID.
OH.
GOOD.
THAT'S WHY
WE CAME HERE TODAY.
"DON'T YOU KNOW"
"WHY MIZUTANI-SAN CAME HERE?"

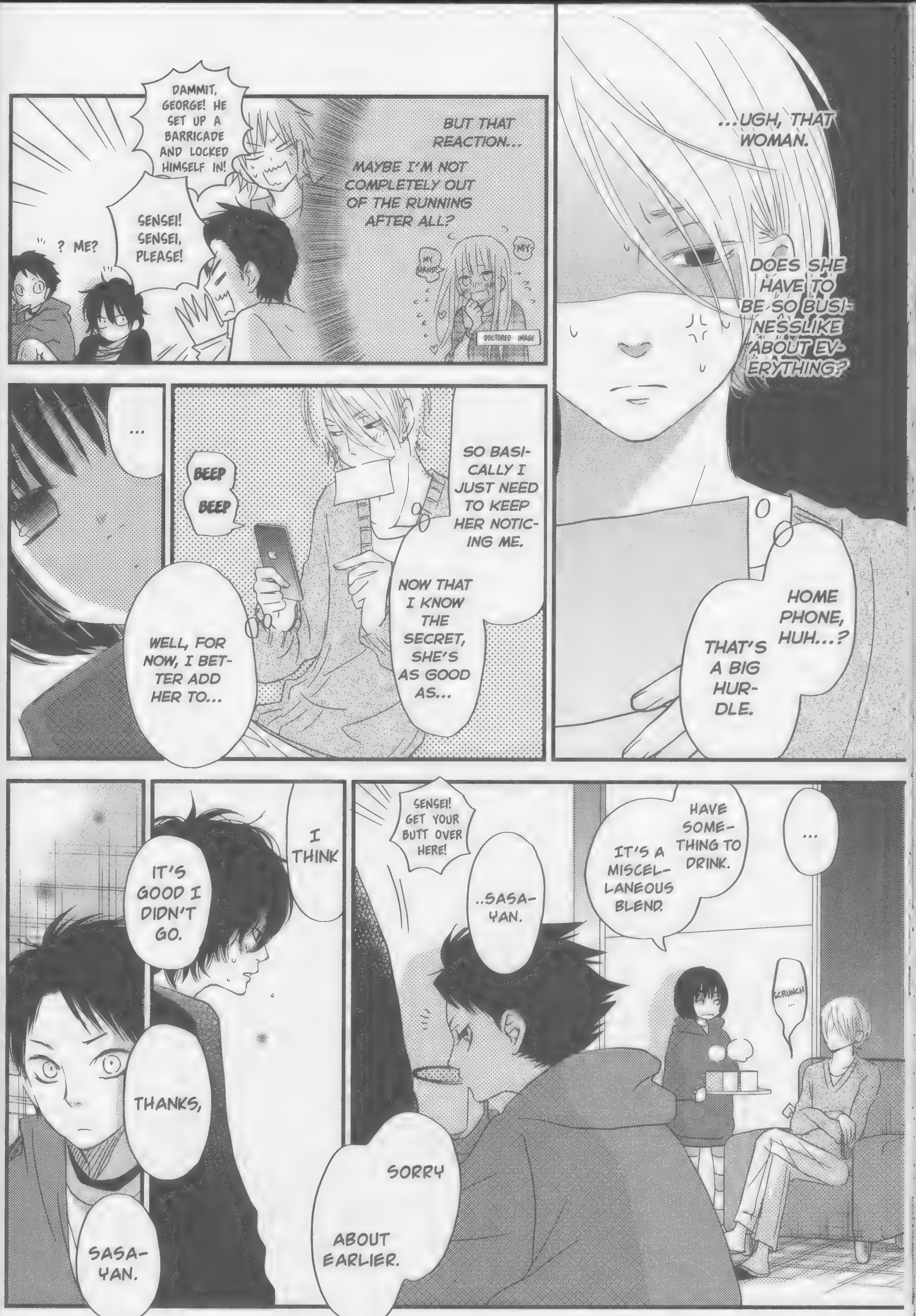

HARU.
AREN'T YOU COLD OVER THERE?
...
WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER HERE BY THE HEATER?
YAWN
SHIZUKU.
GIVE ME YOUR HAND!
?
...IT'S STILL NOT COMING.
? WHAT'S NOT?
THE FIRST TIME YOU TOUCHED ME,
IT MADE ME HAPPY.
I GOT THIS WARM FEELING IN MY GUT.
I THOUGHT THAT'S WHAT I WANTED.
IS THAT...
SO HAPPY,
MY HEART
STARTED POUNDING.
...WHAT HE WANTED...
...TO MAKE SURE OF?

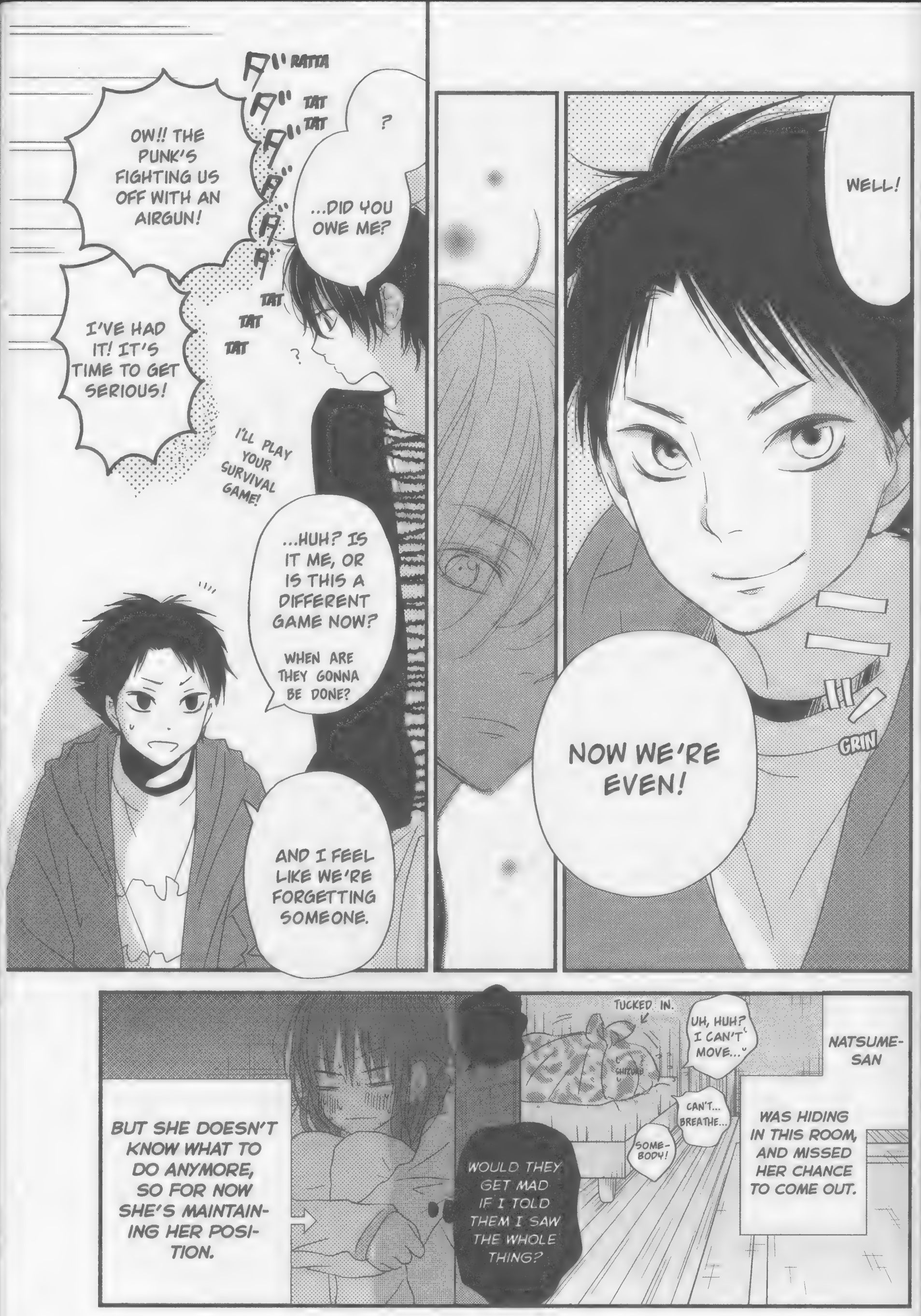

I WAS SURE IT WAS LOVE.
I SEE.
SO THAT'S WHY.
MY HEART'S BEATING SO FAST.
I THINK I MIGHT LIKE YOU.
..SO...
SQUEEZE
YOU DON'T THINK IT'S LOVE NOW?
IT... IT'S NOT THAT!
I DO LOV...
IT'S NOT THAT!
OH. WELL, OKAY THEN.
BLUNT
IF HOLDING HANDS DOESN'T WORK, THEN WHAT CAN I DO TO LIVE UP TO YOUR EXPECTATIONS?
...AW, FORGET IT.
BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU, ISN'T IT?
NO, REALLY.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'S FINE.


I ALWAYS...
...FEEL BETTER WHEN I SEE YOU SMILE, HARU.
...


I'M FREAKING OUT.
HEY! I FOUND GEORGE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WERE ACTUALLY HIDING THERE!
AND YOU THOUGHT IT'D WORK, STUPID!
WELCOME BACK!
...
!
YOSHIDA-KUN.
...
WHERE'S MIZUTANI-SAN?
...
ASLEEP?
HMMM.
YOU'RE DONE RAMPAGING?
I JUST TUCKED HER IN.
AND?
AH! GEORGE RAN AWAY!
AFTER HIM! AFTER HIM!
DASH
SHREDDED SQUID

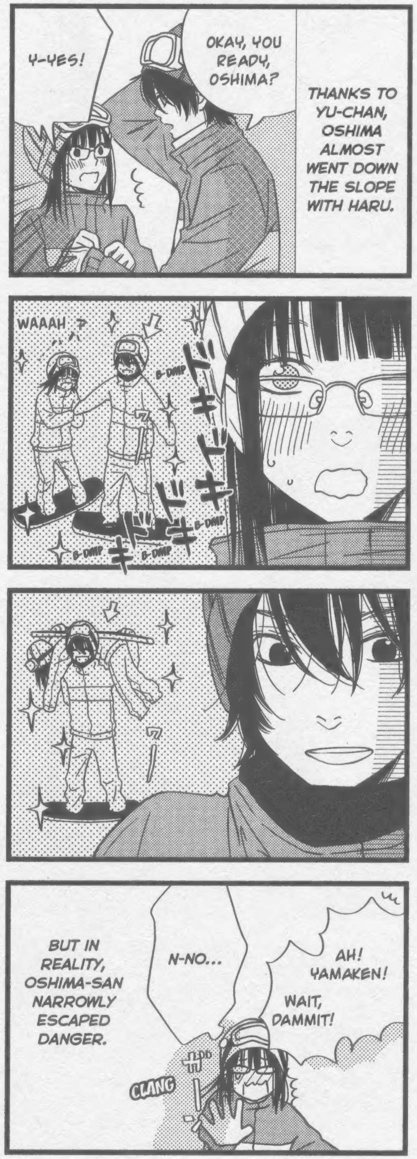

ど
I'M DONE.
FOR TODAY.
PLOP
か
SHIZUKU'S PEACE OF MIND
COMES FIRST!
...YOSHIDA-KUN.
HE'S BACK...
WHEW...
ホ
CHIZURU, THE TEA'S READY!
OH, GOOD.
I WISH
I'D GONE WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE.
THERE WERE LOTS OF DIFFERENT TEAS, SO I PUT THEM ALL IN!
SHIZUKU MIZUTANI
XXX-○○○
KDAYS: 18:00 - 19:00
DAYS: 12:00 - 17:00
ISE CALL DURING
ABOVE HOURS.


...UGH, THAT WOMAN.
DOES SHE HAVE TO BE SO BUSINESSLIKE ABOUT EVERYTHING?
BUT THAT REACTION...
MAYBE I'M NOT COMPLETELY OUT OF THE RUNNING AFTER ALL?
MY
MY HAND!
DOCTORED IMAGE
DAMMIT, GEORGE! HE SET UP A BARRICADE AND LOCKED HIMSELF IN!
SENSEI! SENSEI, PLEASE!
? ME?
HOME PHONE, HUH...?
THAT'S A BIG HURDLE.
SO BASICALLY I JUST NEED TO KEEP HER NOTICING ME.
NOW THAT I KNOW THE SECRET, SHE'S AS GOOD AS...
BEEP
BEEP
WELL, FOR NOW, I BETTER ADD HER TO...
...
SENSEI! GET YOUR BUTT OVER HERE!
HAVE SOMETHING TO DRINK.
IT'S A MISCELLANEOUS BLEND.
...
SCRUNCH...
..SASAYAN.
SORRY ABOUT EARLIER.
I THINK
IT'S GOOD I DIDN'T GO.
THANKS,
SASAYAN.

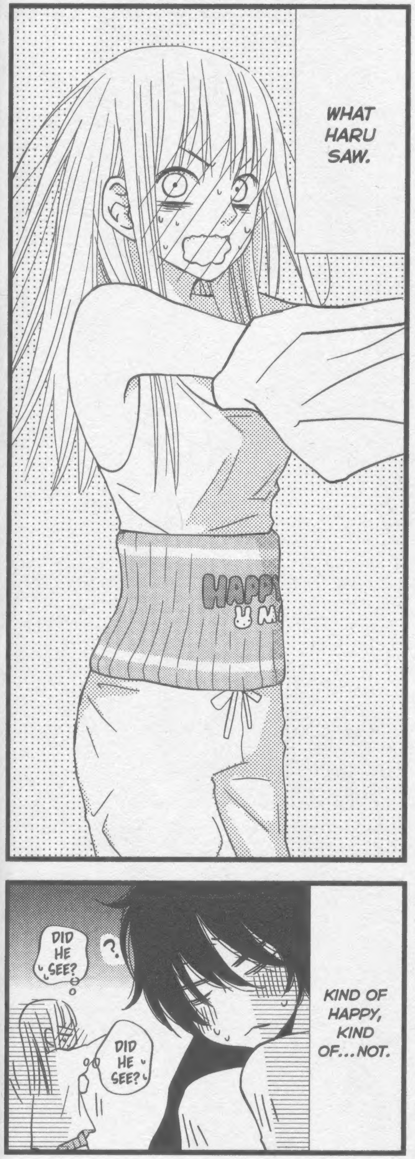

WELL!
NOW WE'RE EVEN!
GRIN
?
...DID YOU OWE ME?
RATTA
TAT
TAT
TAT
TAT
TAT
OW!! THE PUNK'S FIGHTING US OFF WITH AN AIRGUN!
I'VE HAD IT! IT'S TIME TO GET SERIOUS!
I'LL PLAY YOUR SURVIVAL GAME!
...HUH? IS IT ME, OR IS THIS A DIFFERENT GAME NOW?
WHEN ARE THEY GONNA BE DONE?
AND I FEEL LIKE WE'RE FORGETTING SOMEONE.
NATSUME-SAN
WAS HIDING IN THIS ROOM, AND MISSED HER CHANCE TO COME OUT.
TUCKED IN.
UH, HUH? I CAN'T MOVE...
CAN'T... BREATHE...
SOMEBODY!
WOULD THEY GET MAD IF I TOLD THEM I SAW THE WHOLE THING?
BUT SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE, SO FOR NOW SHE'S MAINTAINING HER POSITION.

Continued in Volume 6!!

Close Call

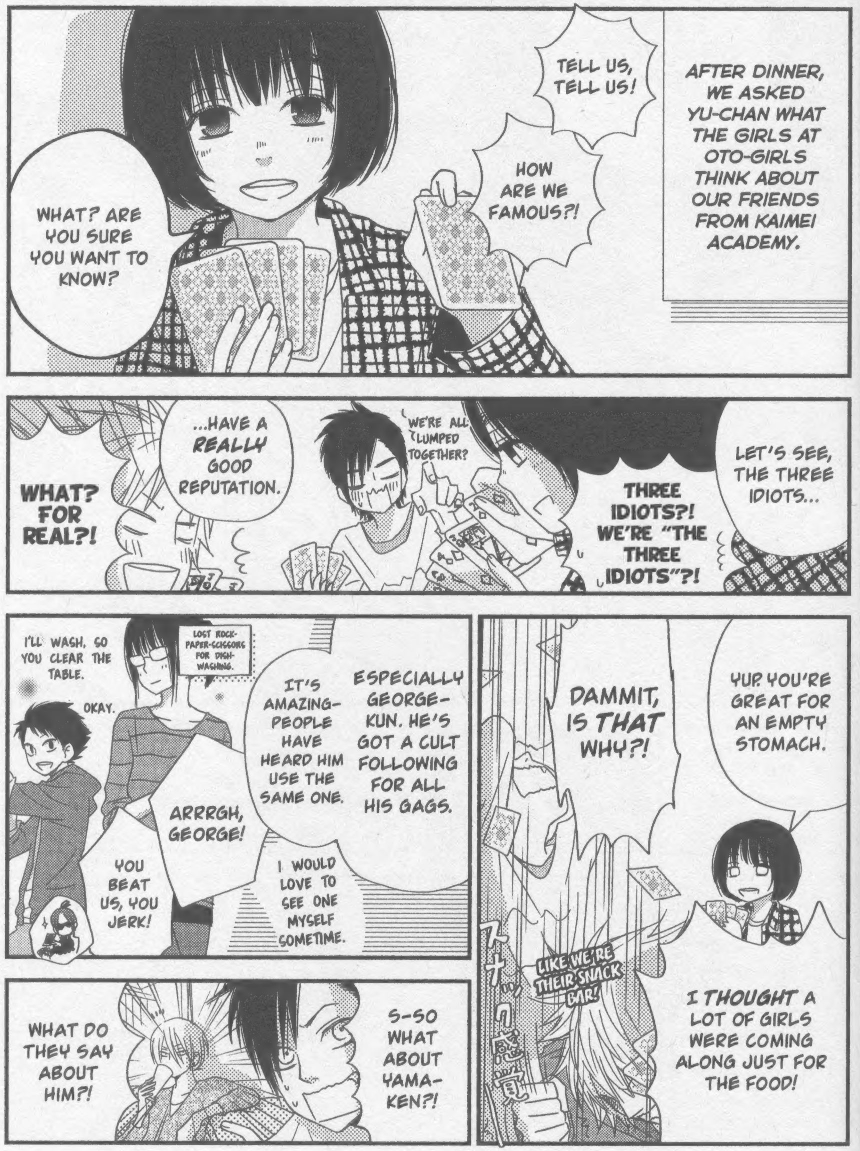

THANKS TO YU-CHAN, OSHIMA ALMOST WENT DOWN THE SLOPE WITH HARU.
OKAY, YOU READY, OSHIMA?
Y-YES!
ドキドキドキ
B-DMP
B-DMP
B-DMP
WAAAH
AH! YAMAKEN!
WAIT, DAMMIT!
N-NO...
BUT IN REALITY, OSHIMA-SAN NARROWLY ESCAPED DANGER.
CLANG

Well, It's Cold


WHAT HARU SAW.
HAPPY
KIND OF HAPPY, KIND OF...NOT.
DID HE SEE?
DID HE SEE?

★ Special Bonus Manga ★

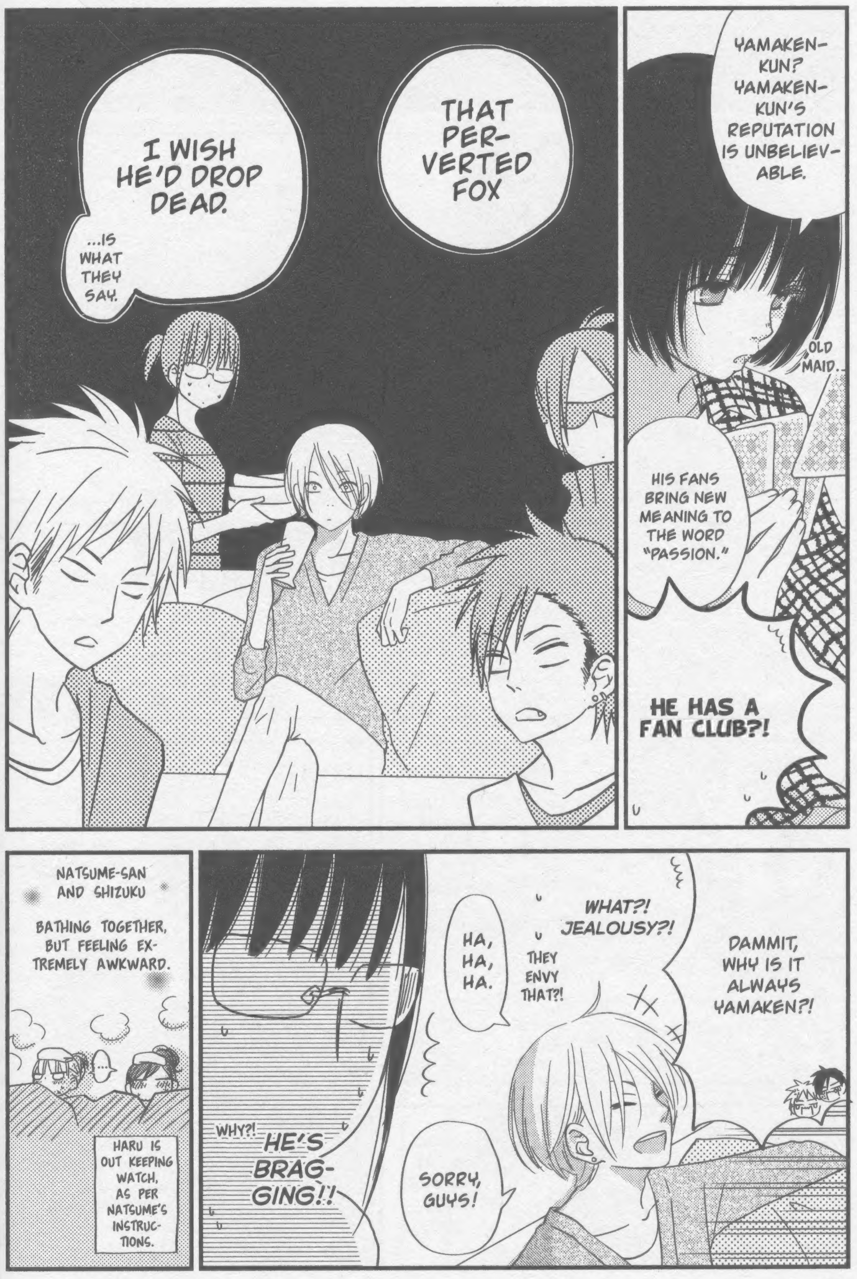
We Asked Yu-chan! The Gang's Reputatoin


AFTER DINNER, WE ASKED YU-CHAN WHAT THE GIRLS AT OTO-GIRLS THINK ABOUT OUR FRIENDS FROM KAIMEI ACADEMY.
TELL US, TELL US!
HOW ARE WE FAMOUS?!
WHAT? ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO KNOW?
LET'S SEE, THE THREE IDIOTS...
THREE IDIOTS?! WE'RE "THE THREE IDIOTS"?!
WE'RE ALL LUMPED TOGETHER?
...HAVE A REALLY GOOD REPUTATION.
WHAT? FOR REAL?!
YUP. YOU'RE GREAT FOR AN EMPTY STOMACH.
DAMMIT, IS THAT WHY?!
I THOUGHT A LOT OF GIRLS WERE COMING ALONG JUST FOR THE FOOD!
LIKE WE'RE THEIR SNACK BAR!
ESPECIALLY GEORGE-KUN. HE'S GOT A CULT FOLLOWING FOR ALL HIS GAGS.
IT'S AMAZING-PEOPLE HAVE HEARD HIM USE THE SAME ONE.
I WOULD LOVE TO SEE ONE MYSELF SOMETIME.
ARRRGH, GEORGE!
LOST ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS FOR DISH-WASHING.
I'LL WASH, SO YOU CLEAR THE TABLE.
OKAY.
YOU BEAT US, YOU JERK!
S-SO WHAT ABOUT YAMAKEN?!
WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT HIM?!

COMMENT

Robico

A LOT OF PEOPLE TELL ME THAT THIS MANGA IS FULL OF WEIRDOS, BUT I DOUBT ANY ONE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE MANGA THINKS OF THEMSELVES AS WEIRD. BUT I DO WONDER IF EVERYONE IS ACTUALLY LIKE THAT. WELL, ANYWAY, THIS IS VOLUME 5. I HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT.

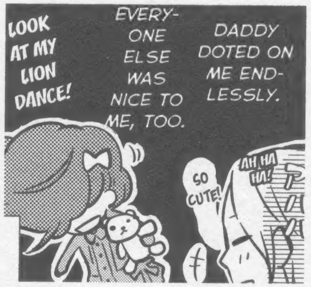

YAMAKEN-KUN? YAMAKEN-KUN'S REPUTATION IS UNBELIEVABLE.
OLD MAID..
HIS FANS BRING NEW MEANING TO THE WORD "PASSION."
HE HAS A FAN CLUB?!
THAT PERVERTED FOX
I WISH HE'D DROP DEAD.
...IS WHAT THEY SAY.
DAMMIT, WHY IS IT ALWAYS YAMAKEN?!
WHAT?! JEALOUSY?!
THEY ENVY THAT?!
HA, HA, HA.
SORRY, GUYS!
HE'S BRAGGING!!
WHY?!
NATSUME-SAN AND SHIZUKU
BATHING TOGETHER, BUT FEELING EXTREMELY AWKWARD.
...
HARU IS OUT KEEPING WATCH, AS PER NATSUME'S INSTRUCTIONS.

★ The End ★

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more art than science. For your edificaiton and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction with our translation of this book, or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

Lion dance, page 10


DADDY DOTED ON ME ENDLESSLY.
EVERYONE ELSE WAS NICE TO ME, TOO.
LOOK AT MY LION DANCE!
AH HA HA!
SO CUTE!

The lion dance is a traditional dance performed at the New Year. The dance is supposed to be performed in a special lion costume, which, as you can see, little Asako is not wearing. She may be trying to imitate the lion mask by using her hair.

The vaulting horse, page 28

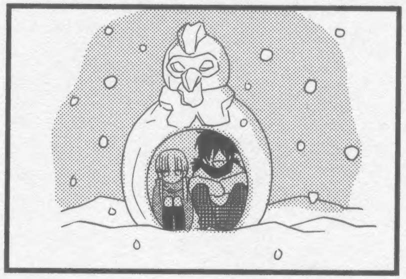
More accurately, this should be called the "vaulting box." It's a piece of gymnastics equipment used in Japanese physical education classes. It is a set of long wooden boxes placed on top of each other, creating different height levels, and students are supposed to leap over them after a running start.

Does-ky dolphin, page 31

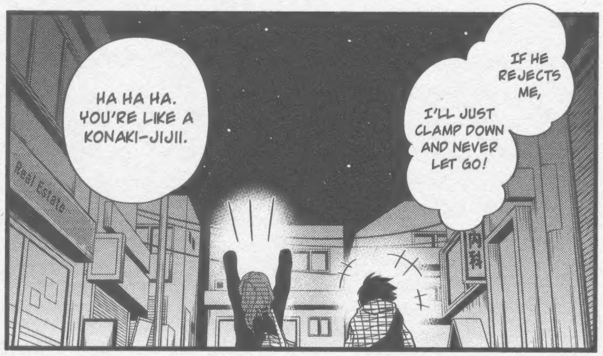
For the curious, the animal that Asako nonsensically brings into the Japanese conversation is an anteater. When she tells Shizuku that her junior high crimes do have something to do with her problem, the word she uses is *ari*. For emphasis, she adds *ō* (roughly translated, it means "majorly"), and just keeps going to make the word *ōarikui*, which means "giant anteater." This may be an attempt on her part to sound smarter by using a bigger word.

The Nago Roost, page 44

Haru named his snow fort after Nagoya the chicken. The word he uses for "roost" is ya, so it's the Nago *Ya*.



Konaki-jiji, page 52


IF HE REJECTS ME,
I'LL JUST CLAMP DOWN AND NEVER LET GO!
HA HA HA. YOU'RE LIKE A KONAKI-JIJII.
内科
Real Estate

Meaning roughly "old man that cries like a child," a konaki-jiji is a creature from Japanese folklore. As the name suggests, the creature looks like an old man, but cries like a baby. If a passerby takes pity on the creature and picks it up to comfort it, it will latch on and refuse to let go. It can also make itself as heavy as a rock, to either crush its victim or prevent him or her from running away.

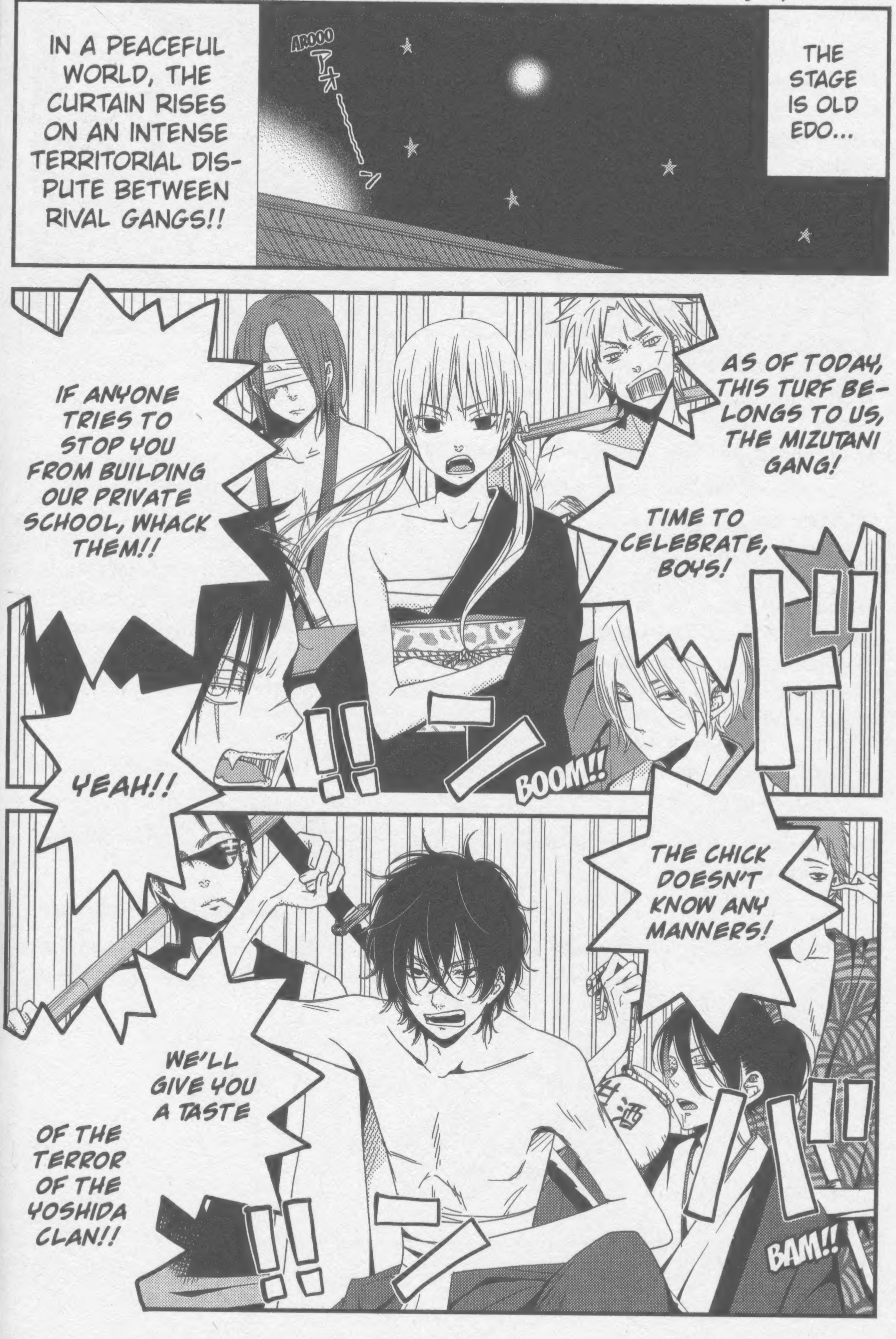
Group date and "Masquerade Ball," page 114

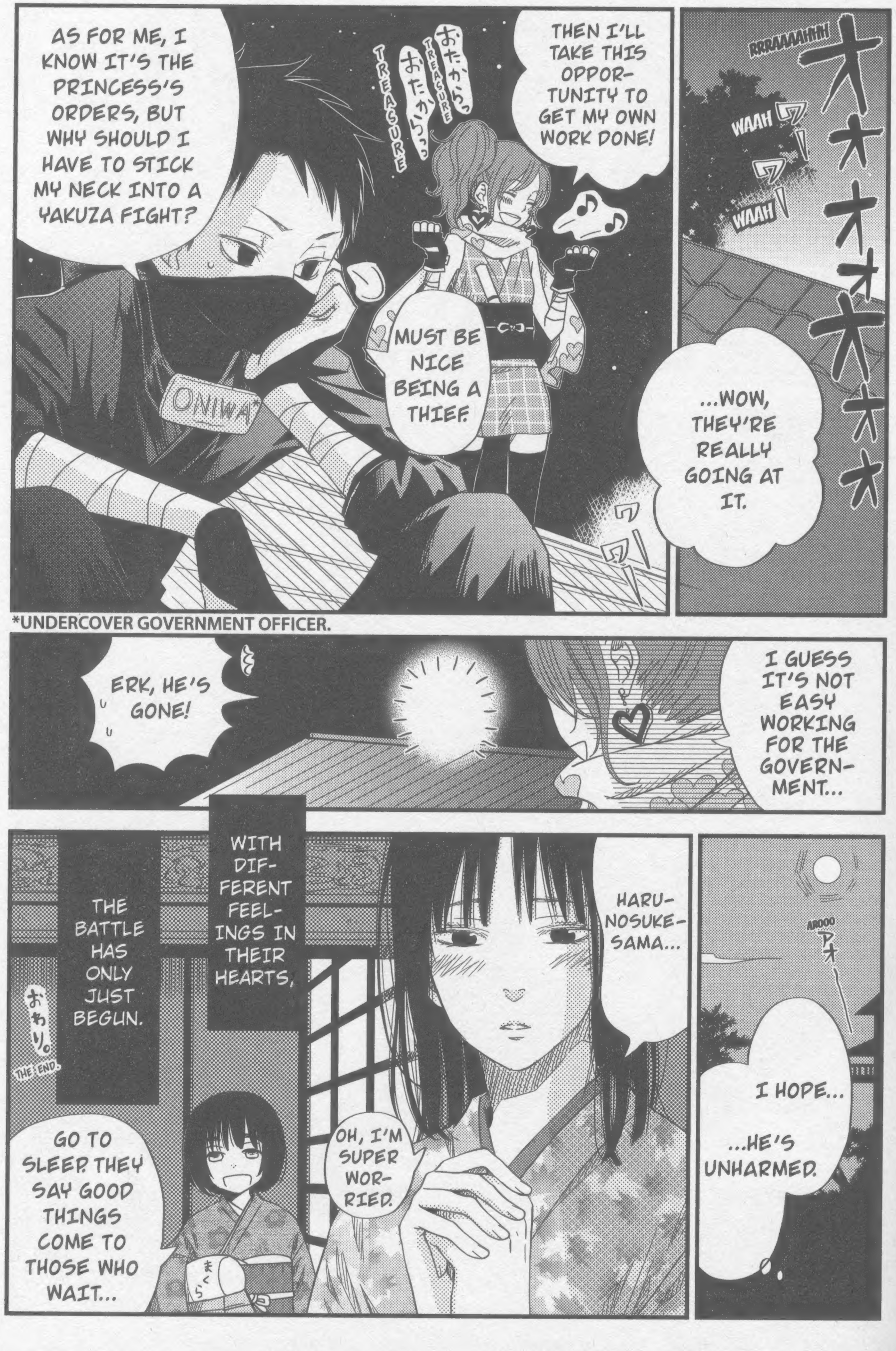
In their never-ending quest to find girlfriends, Ma-bo and his friends had a *gōkon*, which is roughly equivalent to a group date; it's a little get together with equal numbers of boys and girls who may or may not have all known each other previously. The idea is for people to pair up and, in the perfect situation, become official couples. A common venue for such gatherings is a karaoke box—a private room rented by the hour or half hour for karaoke. Apparently at this particular date, George performed "*Kamen Butōkai* (Masquerade Ball)," the 1985 breakout hit from the boy band Shonentai. Ma-bo and the others must have thought this a surefire way to win the heart of any girl.

Kinpira, page 117

Kinpira is a dish of root vegetables (carrots, daikon radish, etc.), sauteed in sugar and soy sauce. It may be a cheap dish, but it probably isn't weird enough to change Shizuku's behavior.

Practically no historical research done! Under-the-Cover Bonus Manga "My Little Mobster"


THE STAGE IS OLD EDO...
AROOO アオーーーン
IN A PEACEFUL WORLD, THE CURTAIN RISES ON AN INTENSE TERRITORIAL DISPUTE BETWEEN RIVAL GANGS!!
AS OF TODAY, THIS TURF BELONGS TO US, THE MIZUTANI GANG!
IF ANYONE TRIES TO STOP YOU FROM BUILDING OUR PRIVATE SCHOOL, WHACK THEM!!
TIME TO CELEBRATE, BOYS!
ドドーン!!
BOOM!!
YEAH!!
THE CHICK DOESN'T KNOW ANY MANNERS!
WE'LL GIVE YOU A TASTE
OF THE TERROR OF THE YOSHIDA CLAN!!
甘酒
バーン!!
BAM!!


RRRAAAAHHH!! オオオオオオオ
WAAH ワー WAAH ワー
THEN I'LL TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GET MY OWN WORK DONE!
おたから。 TREASURE
おたから。。。 TREASURE
AS FOR ME, I KNOW IT'S THE PRINCESS'S ORDERS, BUT WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO STICK MY NECK INTO A YAKUZA FIGHT?
MUST BE NICE BEING A THIEF.
...WOW, THEY'RE REALLY GOING AT IT.
ONIWA*
ワーワー
I GUESS IT'S NOT EASY WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT...
ERK, HE'S GONE!
AROOO アオーー
I HOPE...
...HE'S UNHARMED.
HARUNOSUKE-SAMA...
WITH DIFFERENT FEELINGS IN THEIR HEARTS,
THE BATTLE HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN.
おわり。 THE END.
OH, I'M SUPER WORRIED.
GO TO SLEEP. THEY SAY GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT...
まくら

*UNDERCOVER GOVERNMENT OFFICER.